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**WOMEN'S SENSE OF SELF AND THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SELF AND OTHERS:
AFRO-AMERICAN WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES**

A Dissertation Presented

by

DIANE J. GOODMAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February

1989

School of Education

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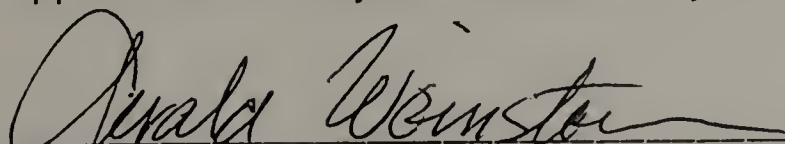
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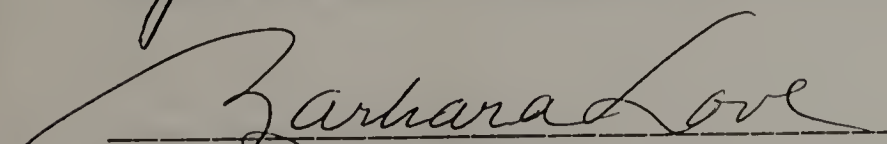
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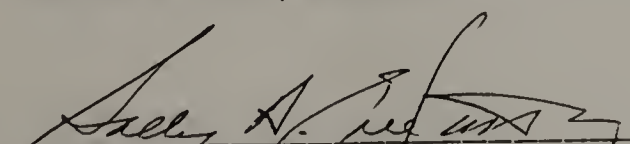
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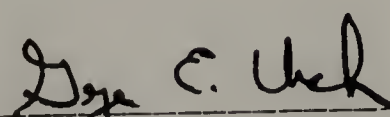
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Writing this dissertation has not only been an academic endeavor but a personal journey. It has been "passionate scholarship"--science making rooted in, animated by and expressive of my values, empowered by community (Du Bois, 1983). The support I have gotten for doing this work has felt like support for who I am and what I believe. I am both touched and grateful to the many people who have contributed to this process.

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with her. She has been a model of strength and caring, and has profoundly taught me, in ways I can barely express, about love and connection.

ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S SENSE OF SELF AND THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN SELF AND OTHERS:

AFRO-AMERICAN WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

FEBRUARY 1989

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The purpose of this study was to explore Afro-American women's conceptions of self and the relationship between self and others. This was undertaken in the context of self-in-relation theories and research which has indicated that women tend to see themselves as fundamentally connected to others and use a moral orientation based on care and responsibility. This study particularly focused on Black women's sense of self, negotiation of interpersonal differences and ontological perspective.

In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve diverse Afro-American women, ranging in age from 28 to 59. Through qualitative analysis, four groupings emerged which reflected different perspectives of self-identity in relation to others. In the first group, the "survivalists," the women were primarily isolated, unreflective, saw relationships as generally hurtful and disappointing and were most concerned with their own or their children's basic needs. The women in the second group, the "self-

discoverers," were in transition from being self-sacrificing in their attempts to care for and be responsive to others, to recognizing and feeling entitled to their own needs and interests and developing a sense of their own identity. The women in the third group, the "self-oriented carers," were the most diverse. They could both attend to their own needs as well as care for and help others, but tended to be protective of their identity which was not fully integrated. They were actively engaged with further developing their own sense of self and competence. In the fourth group, the "mutualists," the women had a fairly strong sense of identity and interdependent perspective which allowed them to more confidently include themselves and others within the domain of care.

Consistent with previous research, the women in this study generally described a connected and relational sense of self and ontology. Their general orientation to relationships was characterized by a care perspective which was reflected in their desire to help people and their concern with inflicting hurt. Their ontological orientations were consistent with their conceptions and struggles of self-identity and interpersonal negotiation.

Concern for their children, challenges in relationships with men, commitment to their own growth, and independence, rooted in survival were salient factors in their self-development. Racial issues and religion and spirituality were also themes that emerged. Findings from this study point to the need for further investigation of developmental issues, cultural differences and the elaboration of a care orientation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I was hoping that one of the things that would be brought out is the strengths of Black women.

(Toni, participant)

To listen is a privilege, to ask is a responsibility.

(From Halcolm's Evaluation Beatitudes)

Over the past several months I have had the privilege of listening to twelve diverse Afro-American women talk about themselves and their lives, their struggles and their changes. Having asked, I now have the responsibility to share their stories in a way that is honest, respectful and informative. As a White woman, this is especially challenging.

The purpose of this study is to explore Afro-American women's self-definitions and conceptions of self in relation to others. Recent feminist theorists have developed new psychological frameworks which see women's sense of self as a self-in-relation. Research has indicated that women tend to see themselves as fundamentally connected to others and to use a moral orientation based on care and responsibility (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1984; Belenky et al., 1986). These studies have not included Black women or did not specifically consider racial differences. This study will look at how Afro-American women's sense of self and relationships compares with women's responses in this previous research. It will begin to address two overarching questions: How can the

experiences of this small group of Black women enhance our understanding of women's conceptions of self and the relationship between self and others? How do race and ethnicity affect these conceptions?

Background

Male Bias

This study was conducted in the context of work done by feminist scholars on self, morality and relationships. That research has largely focused on gender differences and uncovering women's voices. There has been little inclusion or attention paid to other cultural differences. Their efforts have been aimed at exposing and correcting male bias in traditional Western scientific paradigms, research methodologies and theories of human development.

Many theories of psychological development have been based on the experiences of men (usually White and middle class) and then assumed to be true for all people. Women's experiences and perspectives have usually been ignored, or misrepresented and distorted. Women have rarely measured up to the norms and standards set by men (Westcott, 1979; Wine, 1985; Belenky et al., 1986).

Masculine models of human development have stressed the importance of autonomy, separation and independence. Human development is usually seen as a linear progression from dependent to independent--a process of separating oneself out from the interconnections with others (Miller, 1984; Spieler, 1986). Women's failure to separate has been seen as a failure to develop.

Feminist Models

For over a decade, psychological models have been evolving which highlight connection, interdependence, empathy and contextual thinking. Women's greater sense of relatedness is being reconsidered. Women's more relational nature and self-definition was discussed by Jean Baker Miller in her pioneering work, Toward a New Psychology of Women (1976). She saw women's psychological characteristics as strengths, reframing women's "weaknesses" of dependency, vulnerability and helplessness as qualities essential for psychological well-being. Miller maintains that all development occurs in the context of relationships, though women may more readily acknowledge the need for affiliation. Contrary to the masculine assumptions, relational development does not mean a lack of self-definition.

Nancy Chodorow (1974, 1978) explained differences in male and female personality as the result of different experiences of early childrearing and processes of gender identity development. Largely due to the fact that women are primarily responsible for raising children, feminine personality more than masculine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people.

Miller and Chodorow were central in advancing positive portrayals of women's psychology and the primacy of relationships for identity and growth. Carol Gilligan (1977, 1982) expanded and added to these premises. By listening to the voices of women, as well as men, she was able to build new frameworks of the development of self, relationships and morality. She noticed that

men and women tend to speak in different voices. Women's development and reasoning is not immature or deficient, but reflects a different path and way of constructing reality.

Gilligan identified two different modes of self-definition and moral orientation which are gender related. She found that different conceptions of self and relationships underly moral reasoning. Men tend to define themselves through separation and autonomy and see themselves as independent from other people. They prefer a morality of justice and rights which relies on abstract laws and universal principles. The goal is to resolve conflicts impersonally, impersonally and fairly.

Women tend to have conceptions of self rooted in connection and relatedness and see themselves as interdependent with others. They prefer a morality based on care and responsibility. Moral choices are determined inductively with each individual understood in his or her own terms. The aim is to maintain relationships and prevent hurt while preserving personal integrity.

Gilligan also suggested a sequence of development within a morality of care. The three perspectives reflect changes in how women define themselves and relationships others. In the first mode, the focus is on caring for the self to ensure survival. When this begins to be seen as selfish the focus shifts to responsibility and goodness. In this second perspective, goodness becomes equated with caring for others, along with self-sacrifice and conformity. The third perspective is marked by a transition from goodness to truth and a morality of nonviolence. There is the recognition that interdependence requires the participation and

interaction of integral selves. The attempt is to maintain ties where possible without sacrificing the integrity of the self.

Gilligan's work has generated other studies which have sought to further test and expand on her hypotheses. Lyon's (1983) conducted the first systematic study which supported Gilligan's findings of justice and care moral orientations and their relationship to both gender and separate and connected senses of self. Subsequent research has been consistent with the premises of the centrality of care and relatedness for women in both their self-identity and moral reasoning. However, the foci of the investigations have varied and have included: images of violence (Pollack and Gilligan, 1982); women's moral dilemmas (Freeman, 1985); development of construction of self and relationship (Alishio, 1985); collectivist notions of self (Lykes, 1985); epistemological perspective (Belenky et al., 1986); crises in romantic relationships (Wood, 1986); spirituality (Randour, 1987); and women's longitudinal identity development (Josselson, 1987).

In the above studies, many of the feminist researchers (ie. Gilligan, 1982; Freeman, 1985; and Belenky, 1986) have used qualitative methodologies which allow people to discuss their experiences in their own terms and to describe how they make meaning of their lives. Analysis has been contextual and interpretive. This is a significant difference from traditional quantitative methods which are tied to the scientific method. A notable example is Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg's studies (1982) which asked people to consider hypothetical moral dilemmas, regardless of their relevance to the participant. Their responses

were then coded according to predetermined categories which had been created from male samples. It is now clear that many women's responses were misunderstood.

Paradigm Shifts

Both the psychological theory and the research methodology in these studies reflect a different view of reality. This may be part of a paradigm shift--"the profound change in the thoughts, perceptions and values that form a particular vision of reality"--which is also occurring in other disciplines (Schwartz and Ogilvy, 1979; Capra, 1982). There is a transition away from the objective, reductionist, universal, and analytical model of Newtonian physics towards principles of holism, interrelatedness, synthesis and multiple realities. These changes may indicate not only scientific but social transformation. The world view of our present culture, which has been based on patriarchal doctrines and masculine values, now appears to be recognizing and incorporating the neglected feminine qualities (Ferguson, 1980; Capra, 1982; Lenz and Myerhoff, 1985).

Rationale and Significance of this Study

Since the development of these new self-in-relation theories has largely been based on the study of White, middle class women and has not considered cultural differences, this research will further explore and expand women's relational development and its applicability to women from African-American backgrounds.

Feminist theorists have argued that knowledge must be grounded in experience and that human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which people engage (Harding and Hintikka, 1983). The social and historical context is a critical factor in shaping one's experience and psychological perspective. Feminists have strongly criticized the fact that male experience (White, middle class) has been taken as human experience upon which general theories, concepts and methodologies have been built.

Yet, as feminists create new models which are grounded in women's experience it is important to ask, "Which women's experiences?" We do not want to recreate a parallel scenario. It is especially important that "women" does not implicitly mean "White women" and that White women do not become the norm as men have been in studies of "human" development. Therefore, especially in feminist work which so valiently uncovers and transcends the exclusivity of sexist scientific practices, it is critical that the research exemplifies more inclusive processes and concepts. The experiences of a wide range of women must consciously and intentionally be included and the methods and theories constantly reexamined as we gather more information.

There are many differences among women and many cultural groups. Race and ethnicity are areas in which people inherit different cultural orientations and receive different treatment within society. Black women have both the cultural experience of being female and the cultural experience of being Black (in addition to other social identities). They have been confronted with both sexism and racism. While the research on self and relationships has

made some strong suggestions about women as a group, the effect of being Black as well as a woman has not been explored. This study will begin to address this deficiency by explicitly focusing on the experiences of Afro-American women.

Afro-American Women

There are several reasons why the study of Afro-American women's sense of self and the connection between self and other seemed particularly interesting. First, is the similarity between an African and feminine world view (Harding, 1986, 1987). In both, the self is dependent on others, defined through relationships to others, with self-interest tied to the welfare of the community or relational complex. In each there is an emphasis on responsibility to increasing the welfare of social complexes through contextual, inductive and tentative decision making processes. An African world view reflects a communal rather than individualistic orientation; it is "grounded in the conception of self as intrinsically connected, as part of both the community and nature" (p. 170). Communities are ontologically and morally more fundamental than the persons who are individuated through their position in the community.

This orientation can be seen in contemporary Afro-American culture. There tends to be close kinship and family ties and a reliance on kinship networks which are not necessarily drawn along "blood lines" (Stack, 1978; Hines and Boyd-Franklin, 1982). This has its historical origins in Africa and then slavery but is still operative today.

Another important aspect is that Black women are often raised to be strong and independent. Black women are commonly taught skills for survival in and for the Black community. Many have had to work outside the home and have often been the sole wage earners. Daughters are taught to become strong independent women who might have to become heads of their own household due to poverty and racism. Yet Black women are socialized to define herself, her existence, in relationship to Black men while simultaneously seeing herself as an independent being (Joseph and Lewis, 1981). Rarely have Black women been recognized as a group separate and distinct from Black men or as a present part of the larger group "women" (Hooks, 1981).

Several of these factors may influence how Afro-American women conceive of self and relationships. On the one hand, an African world view and strong kinship network may support a more relational sense of self and ethic of care. On the other hand, socialization to be strong and independent and survive in a racist culture may promote a more individualistic and rights orientation. There are also other mediating factors, such as socio-economic background and the degree of assimilation and integration. How these multiple forces affect identity and morality may become more evident in the stories of the women in this study. This research will begin to examine how Afro-American women's sense of self and relationships both corresponds with the research to date, as well as suggests additional ways of constructing reality.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will review the research relevant to women's conceptions of self and relationships. The first section is a discussion of moral orientation as it relates to the values and perspectives of self and the connection between self and other. The second section reviews research and theories regarding notions of self and self in relation to others. The third section considers development in the construction of self and relationships. This chapter concludes with an outline of the specific research questions addressed in this study.

Section One: Moral Orientation

Care and Justice Perspectives

Carol Gilligan's theories of self and morality (1977, 1982, 1983) grew out of her initial studies of moral thought and action. She noticed that in the six stage model of morality developed by Lawrence Kohlberg, women rarely reached the highest stages. They tended to cluster around the third stage which was concerned with interpersonal relationships--helping and pleasing others. His theory of moral development was based on all male studies discussing hypothetical moral dilemmas.

Through her interviews with women and men, she developed new theories of moral reasoning and uncovered different conceptions of self and relationships. Her findings were based three studies

(1982): 1) the college student study which included 25 Harvard college students; 2) the rights and responsibilities study of 144 males and females across the lifecycle, from age six to 60; and 3) the abortion study of 29 women between the ages of 15 and 33 from diverse ethnic and social class backgrounds who were considering an abortion. She used interpretive methodology and contextual analysis of individual's accounts of their experience. From their responses to questions about self and morality, conflict and choice, she was able to identify two separate and distinct moral orientations--justice and care. Justice reasoning was more prevalent among males, while care reasoning was primarily used by women.

The justice perspective, previously assumed to be the only dimension of moral development, is a morality of rights and formal reasoning. The care perspective is a morality of care and responsibility. A justice orientation sees an autonomous moral agent who discovers and applies a set of fundamental rules through the use of universal and abstract deductive reasoning. A care orientation is based on responsiveness to others and the imperative to provide care, prevent harm and maintain relationships through the use of inductive reasoning.

According to Gilligan (1986b), the two predispositions towards justice or care are inherent in the two dimensions which characterize all human connection--equality/inequality and attachment/detachment. They arise from the experience of inequality and attachment embedded in the relationship between parent and child. Everyone is vulnerable to oppression and abandonment.

The dialectic of living as separate individuals and in continuing relationship with each other is reflected in the two moral orientations. Morality is fundamentally dialectical, containing an ongoing tension between justice and care (1983). However, half of this dialectic is currently missing from most psychological accounts. An ethic of care allows for a wider view of social reality than is provided by the justice orientation. "The commitment to seeing the other entails a responsiveness to the other's point of view, not as mirroring one's own but as refracting a different psychology and social reality" (1983, p. 45). Moral judgement can not be considered apart from the context and social history of the individual; moral discovery occurs through dialogue as opposed to logical deduction.

Both men and women tend to raise concerns of care and justice in discussing a moral dilemma but prefer one mode over the other. The predominant mode is related to, but not defined by gender. Lyons (1983) found that all the females in her sample used considerations of response, but 36% (6) did not mention consideration of rights. The opposite was true of males. All the males mentioned consideration of rights, but 36% (6) did not use consideration of rights in their response.

In recent research with 80 educationally advantaged North American adolescents and adults Gilligan and Attanucci (1986) found that while 69% of the participants raised considerations of justice and care, two-thirds of this group focused more of their attention on one set of concerns. All but one of the men who focused, focused on

justice whereas one-third of the women focused on care and one-third focused on justice.

This study included 39 racially diverse first year medical students between the ages of 21 and 27. Of the 26 men and 13 women, 19 were White and 20 were minorities (Black, Hispanic, and Asian American). This is the only research on adults conducted by Gilligan and her colleagues which considered race, though it does not distinguish between the different racial minority groups. The moral dilemmas presented by White students were more likely to fall into the Care-Justice category (equal considerations of care and justice) and the dilemmas of the minority students into the Justice category. The medical students did not show the same relationship between gender and moral orientation as did the others in the study. However, the only two people in the Care focus category were a White woman and a minority woman. Since the medical students provided divergent data, their responses may have more relevance to understanding the moral reasoning of medical students than illuminating the differences in moral orientation due to race or sex.

Moral Conflict and Social Ideology

This research has indicated that moral conflict for males more often is the result of tension between self and abstract rules than for females where it more often is the result of tension between self and others. This is highlighted by our social ideology which often confronts women with the conflict between femininity and adulthood. Femininity has come to mean care and concern for others while adulthood is seen as "independent assertion in judgement and

action" (Gilligan, 1977 p. 490). This notion of adulthood has been the standard of male development.

The construction of a moral dilemma as a conflict between self and other and the prevailing societal expectations, is illustrated in a study of women's moral dilemmas conducted by Freeman (1985). She sought to improve and expand on Gilligan's investigation. Freeman claimed that looking at abortion as a moral dilemma may particularly elicit caring responses. It also still asks women to respond to a moral dilemma as defined by the researcher. In her study, she asked 31 mostly White, middle class American women, ages 19-56 to define and discuss moral conflicts as they defined them. She then examined the ways broader social change has affected their personal development.

Freeman found that the common criteria of a moral dilemma involved the effect of action on others, especially on family. Responsibility, commitment and consequences to others were often cited as constituents of a moral decision. Independence, consequences to self, and power and control over own's own life are also paramount and frequently overshadow the other criteria in determining moral choices. Independence becomes a moral dilemma for women because it means that women must deviate from their socialization and traditional social identities.

Independence, as discussed by the women, is not seen in the "masculine" sense as the absence of interpersonal relationships and/or solitary functioning and achievement. Instead, it means the "freedom of identity formation with its corresponding internal

processes and open-ended eventualities" (p. 251). Since women have been expected to give precedence to interpersonal issues and the needs of others over their own individual growth, self-determination and pursuits outside the family have become a moral problem.

Freeman found that women emphasize the great psychological risk (and to a lesser degree the practical risks) of acting independently which threatens their relationship to themselves and others. Psychological survival ultimately determines women's decisions. Morality comes to mean personal integrity.

The dilemmas women discuss are turning points in that they represent a separation from socially determined identities toward self-definition and independence. Caretaking abilities remain an integral source of pride and self-esteem, but are no longer exclusive or predominant to self. A woman's decision to deviate from social norms is often cast in terms of both self-interest and benefit to others.

Freeman notes that women did rely on a morality of principles and justice when claiming the right to self-determination and individual freedom. These egalitarian ideals of personal integrity and self-actualization are part of our social ideals and social philosophy which promote individualism. Women are responding as well to a discriminatory social ideology. Social belief systems have been used to support and maintain women's dependence and subordination of self to others. Independence therefore becomes a moral activity, not just an "simple" developmental task. Freeman stresses the significance of social ideology in determining what

becomes a moral choice and the importance of countervailing social ideology (i.e., the Women's Movement) in fostering development.

Section Two: Conceptions of Self and Relationships

Separate and Connected Constructions of Self

Different moral orientations reflect different values and ways of viewing the world which include assumptions of self, others and the relationship between them.

The values of justice and autonomy, presupposed in the current theories of human growth and incorporated into definitions of morality and self, imply a view of the individual as separate and of relationships as either hierarchical or contractual, bound by the alternatives of constraint and cooperation. In contrast, the values of care and connection, salient in women's thinking, imply a view of the self and other as interdependent and of relationships as networks created and sustained by attention and response (Gilligan, 1986, p. 242).

In an effort to substantiate these different notions of self, relationships and morality advanced by Gilligan, Lyons (1983) conducted open-ended interviews with 36 individuals which included male and female children, adolescents and adults with high levels of intelligence, education and social class. She found that how one perceived others and conceptualized being relation to them was central to the way of describing oneself and thinking about moral choice.

Two modes of being in relation to others--separate/objective and connected, and two corresponding perspectives towards others--reciprocity and response were identified. Though both men and

women define themselves in relation to others with equal frequency, their characterization of these relationships are different. Men more frequently use the characterization of the separate/objective self while women tend to use the connected self.

The separate/objective self experiences relationships in terms of reciprocity between separate individuals. From a perspective towards others that is based on reciprocity, the concern for others is expressed through considering them as one would like to be considered, with objectivity and fairness. Rules and roles which come from duties of obligation and commitment to maintain fairness and reciprocity in relationships. This perspective assumes that others are the same as the self; it assumes an ideal relationship of equality. Separate/objective individuals tend to use a morality of justice.

The connected self experiences relationships as a response to others in their terms. Lyons defines response as "the interactive process in which a developing and changing individual views others as also changing across the life cycle" (p. 135). The concern for the good of others or for the alleviation of their burden, hurt, or suffering (physical or psychological) is central. The activity of care maintains and sustains caring and connection in relationships. A sense of interdependence arises from the recognition of the interconnectedness of people. This perspective assumes that others are different from oneself. Therefore, invoking strict equality does not allow for seeing people in their specific contexts or in their own terms. The desire is to enter into other's situations in order to

know them as they do. Individuals with a connected sense of self tend to use a morality of care.

Lyons' findings corroborate Gilligan's earlier observations that women tend to define themselves in the context of human relationships and judge themselves in terms of their ability to care. Identity and intimacy are often fused. In describing themselves, women use terms of attachment and see strength in the activity of attachment--"giving to, helping out, being kind, and not hurting." (1982, p. 159). Even highly successful and achieving women did not mention their academic and professional distinction. Many regarded their professional activities as jeopardizing their own sense of themselves. Women may experience a conflict between achievement and care which can leave them feeling "divided in judgement or feeling betrayed" (p. 159).

In contrast, identity for men is "different, clearer, more direct, more distinct and sharp-edged" (p. 160). The world of the self may include "people" and "deep attachments" but no particular person or relationship is mentioned, nor is the activity of relationship discussed in the context of self-description. Instead of verbs of attachment used by women, men use words of separation--"intelligent," "logical," "imaginative," honest" sometimes even "cocky and arrogant." (p. 161).

For men, the self is defined more in separation, for women more in attachment. In their descriptions of self, men emphasize involvement with others as qualifying identity, more than helping to realize it. Instead of attachment, individual achievement is

important, and the standard of self-assessment and success is defined by great ideas or distinctive activity.

Related to these different self-definitions are different ways men and women conceptualize relationships. Whereas women tend use an image of a "web," men tend use the image of "hierarchy." Each image marks as dangerous the place which the other defines as safe. The top of the hierarchy becomes the edge of the web and the center of the network of connection becomes the middle of the hierarchical progression. Men more likely wish to be alone at the top and fear that others will get too close; women more likely wish to be at the center of connection and fear being too far out on the edge.

These different conceptualizations of relationships were evident in an investigation of images of violence. Pollack and Gilligan (1982) found that not only were there greater incidences of violence in the fantasy stories written by men (51% for men and 22% for women) but sex differences in the context in which the violence occurred. Men's violence was more often in response to affiliation while women's was more frequently in response to situations of achievement. Of the 88 undergraduate men, 25% wrote stories of violence for pictures of affiliation, 6.8% for pictures of achievement, and 19.3% for pictures featuring both affiliation and achievement. Out of the 50 women undergraduates, six percent wrote stories of violence for pictures of affiliation, 16% for pictures of achievement and none wrote violent responses for situations of both affiliation and achievement. It seems that for men, danger is seen in situations of affiliation, arising from a fear

of a sense of connection. On the other hand, women see danger in situations of competitive achievement, arising from a fear of sense of isolation.

Wood (1986) used Gilligan's frameworks of identity and morality to look at approaches to interpersonal relationships, in particular crises in permanent or potentially permanent long-term (heterosexual) romantic relationships. Through a critical analysis of discourse, she examined how women and men define and "locate" the relationship crisis, and what they cite as sources of personal pride and regret in their management of the crisis. Her sample included 20 women and 14 men from a University community.

In describing the relationship crisis, women's most characteristic concerns center on relational issues--problems within the relationship and personal identity. Women fear investing themselves in relationships where they do not perceive an equivalent investment from their partner. This imbalance represents a threat to their selfhood. For men, the crisis is caused by the partner (qualities of the partner) or by external circumstances.

Bases of self-judgement in handling the crisis include sources of pride and sources of regret. Three major sources of pride are identified by women: attending to the quality of the process, caring for others, and being responsible to themselves. Reflection and an open climate are seen as aspects of a good process. Men discuss the adherence to abstract rules or principles, and responsibilities to self as main sources of pride. For men, there is a consistency between the sources of pride and their definition of the crisis. In

both cases, they locate control in external factors and in phenomena removed from the specific relationship and self. For women, asserting their own goals is balanced by sensitivity to the process and attempts to recognize and respond to the other's needs and feelings.

Women and men generally agree on what they regret though women rely on consistent bases of self-judgement. Their sources of regret parallel their sources of pride: poor process, inadequate caring for others and not taking sufficient responsibility for themselves. Men also identify inattention to process as most important, in addition to lack of caring and failure to meet responsibility to self. Unlike their descriptions of crisis and pride, men's accounts of regrets are expressed in the first person and had self-attributions of fault. Although women fault themselves for not doing more in terms of process, men regret having neglected it. Similarly, women believe they cared, but not enough, while men fault themselves for lack of caring in an absolute sense. Wood noted that women have a tendency to devalue themselves and reflect an emerging legitimization of responsibilities to self. Men reflect a more decisive advancing of self-interest.

The differences cited do not arise from intrinsically different crises reported, but on different conceptions of relationships. Wood's findings are consistent with Gilligan's. Women depict relationships, not individuals, as primary. They discuss individuals, including themselves within the context of relationships. Therefore, they do not single out partners as causes for the problems; they are part of the relationship and can not be considered in isolation.

Women's fears for their own identities reflect the view of self as enmeshed in and affected by connections with others. Women's sources of pride and regret, which are based on their adequacy of care, also supports Gilligans contention that women use of a judgement of care in their relationships with others. Yet, their pride in (or regrets of) responsibility to self shows that women have more than a one-dimensional view of themselves as other-oriented nurturers. During the crisis, women try to balance the priorities of respect for the process, others and themselves. Men are more likely to be motivated by the concern to honor principles that exist independently of and prior to the particular relationship, and by strong self-interest. Men depicted themselves as separated from relationships and define relationship problems in ways that relieve them of personal responsibility.

Wood postulates that differences in social context account for some of these discrepancies. Men retain positions of power, while women are relatively powerless. This difference fosters men's distance from relationships and security apart from others. On the other hand, this predisposes women to be highly concerned with maintaining connections with others, especially those who hold power.

The work of Nancy Chodorow (1974, 1978) sheds light on the different ways of experiencing self and relationships. Utilizing object relations theory, she claims that the major factor in the general and almost universal differences in masculine and feminine personality and roles is that women are largely responsible for early childrearing. Male and female children have different experiences

of this social environment which subsequently leads to differences in the development of gender identity. "Care and socialization of girls by women ensures production of feminine personalities founded in relation and connection, with flexible rather than rigid ego boundaries and with a comparatively secure sense of gender identity" (1974, p. 58).

Male identity is tied to separating from the mother and rejecting or denying his attachment, identification or dependence on her. Therefore, men are more likely to fear close affiliation and experience intimacy as a potential loss of self. On the other hand, female identity development takes place within the context of the relationship with the mother and does not require the rejection of an earlier identification. "Girls emerge from this period [post-oedipal] with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not" (1978, p. 167). The developmental difficulty for females, then, may be individuation or differentiation.

The early work of Jean Baker Miller (1976) also recognized gender differences in the experience of affiliation. For men affiliation can be seen as an "impediment, a loss, a danger, or at least second best" (p. 83). Women may feel "deeply satisfied, fulfilled, successful and free to go on to other things (p. 83). The difficulty for women can be the perception of loss of self when there is a disruption or loss of a relationship.

While Miller contends that individual development proceeds only by means of affiliation for both men and women, she believes that women have a greater need and recognition for relationships. "Women stay with, build on and develop in the context of attachment

and affiliation with others. Indeed women's sense of self becomes very much more organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliation and relationship (p. 83). This notion of women's sense of self as a self-in-relation is continuing to be explored by Miller and her colleagues at the Stone Center (Miller, 1984, 1986; Jordan et al., 1983; Jordan, 1984; Kaplan, 1984; Surrey, 1985).

Social Individuality

M. Brintion Lykes (1985) offers a critique and alternative conceptualization of the self-in-relation models proposed by Chodorow, Miller, Gilligan and Lyons. Lykes recognizes the importance of the idea of self-in-relation as a challenge to autonomous individualism, "the notion of the self rooted in assumptions of autonomy, independence and separation" (p. 268). However, she claims it does not go far enough in acknowledging the social and collective nature of the self.

Lykes views the self-in-connection, as described by Lyons and Gilligan, as resembling a social interactionist perspective in which two separate entities are seen as intimately "connected" or "other directed."

This view reflects a 'female' variation of the dominant male model of the 'egocentric contractual' idea of the self that dominates Western models wherein two autonomous selves interact. ... The notion of an autonomous and independent self is extended by suggesting two (not one) interdependent (not independent) selves, but the underlying assumption of individualism is retained" (p. 273).

According to Lykes, this notion of self still does not have a social or collective definition. Notions of the self are embedded in and reconstructed from social arrangements; community or collective experiences are fundamental to the articulation of individuality. The ways these experiences are constrained by differences in access to power and resources are also critical to the development of the self as social. The dialectical relationship of self and society needs to be understood in order to fully understand the individual.

Lykes contends that people's notion of the self may differ due to social experiences at the group level (i.e., being a member of a social group excluded from power) and at the individual level (i.e., having experiences in collective activities for social change). "Individuals from majority groups (e.g., white upper class males) whose material conditions and social relations are most likely to be consonant with individualism would be more likely to have a notion of the self as autonomous individualism. Persons in less powerful groups (e.g., women, people of color, working class people) are more likely to perceive contradictions between the assumptions of autonomous individualism and their social experiences." (p. 276). In fact, being-in-relation may be the means of survival.

Lykes sought to empirically investigate this notion of the self as social individuality, which "reflects a dialectical understanding of individuality and sociality grounded in an experience of social relations characterized by inequalities of power" (p. 268). In a primarily quantitative study of 84 White adult men and women she found women slightly more likely to be social individualists. There

was preliminary evidence to support her hypothesis the one's notion of self is strongly influenced by collective experiences and relationship to social power.

Section Three: Developmental Sequences

Gilligan

Gilligan (1987) makes the distinction between differences in orientation (alternative perspectives or frameworks) and differences in developmental stage (more or less adequate positions within a single orientation). Through the in-depth interviews with women in the abortion study, she identified a sequence in the development of care and responsibility. While she avoids the use of the term "stage" and the model of hierarchical development, she suggests a sequence of three perspectives or modes which reflect different ways women think about the connection between self and others.

The First Perspective. The self is the sole concern in the first perspective. Connection to others is a way to ensure survival by providing access to things one is powerless to get for oneself. "Relationships are seen either as a source of personal gratification or as an impediment to gratification, in which case they are experienced as threatening or disappointing" (1983, p. 41). The women expressing this view feel constrained by the lack of power that stems from feeling disconnected and thus all alone. Isolation may be chosen to protect against hurt.

This concern with self in the first mode, which is egocentric and unreflective, becomes seen as selfish as an understanding of responsibility grows through the experience of relationships. A move toward social participation is seen in this transition from selfishness to responsibility. In her study, the experience of pregnancy is a vivid illustration of the connection between self and other. While still concerned with oneself, the focus now becomes how well one is able to care for others.

The Second Perspective. The second mode is attained when the concern with responsibility becomes the consideration of the needs of the other. This perspective is marked by dependence and fear of abandonment. Defining the self and assessing its worth is based on the ability to care for and protect others. The woman wishes to please and expects to be loved and cared for in return for goodness. Therefore, she is reticent about taking stands on "controversial issues" and willing to make exceptions all the time. The self is of uncertain strength, unwilling to deal with choice and avoiding of confrontation. Consensual judgement about goodness becomes the overriding concern and survival depends on acceptance by others.

The needs of others are fused with the needs of self. In her desire not to be selfish and her fear of losing the relationship, a woman may confuse herself with the other. An underlying assumption of this perspective is that she is responsible for the actions of others while others are responsible for the choices she makes. She may disguise assertion or the initiation of her own position as a response to someone else, which leads to indirect action, which in the end leaves everyone feeling manipulated and

betrayed. Submission to others is seen to be a manifestation of care and concern. Women are caught between the passivity of dependence and the activity of care and may be "suspended in a paralysis of initiative with respect to both action and thought." (1982, p. 82). The strength of this stage is its capacity for caring and its limitation is the restriction it imposes on direct expression.

The Third Perspective. A shift from goodness to truth denotes the third perspective. As women recognize the inequality between other and self, confusion arises between self-sacrifice and care which fosters movement to this mode. "The focus on not hurting others as the substance of a morality of care then gives way gradually to the realization that basing decisions on the wishes of others and holding them accountable for one's own choice constitutes an evasion of responsibility that erodes the fabric of relationships" (1983, p. 43). Rather than a bond of mutual dependence, relationships are understood as a dynamic process of mutual interaction.

In reconsidering the relationship between self and other, a woman considers her own needs within the domain of her care and concern. In reexamining the concept of responsibility, she juxtaposes the concern with what other people think with a new inner judgement. The morality of action is assessed not on the basis of its appearance in the eyes of others, but in terms of its intention and consequences. She is able to encompass the needs of both self and other; she is able to be responsible to others and therefore be good, but also responsible to self and therefore be honest and "real." This view is interdependence, in which awareness of the

interconnection between other and self dissipates the tension between selfishness and responsibility.

The transition to mode three hinges on a clear self-concept. If women are uncertain about their own self-worth and thus do not feel equal, then self-assertion feels like selfishness again. In the third perspective, women can acknowledge self and accept responsibility for choice as well as acknowledge their own power and worth.

"When the distinction between helping and pleasing frees the activity of taking care from the wish for approval from others, the ethic of responsibility can become a self-chosen anchor of personal integrity and strength" (1982, p. 171). A woman is able to claim moral equality between self and others and to include both in the scope of her care. The focus of care shifts from other to the relationship itself. Since people have different experiences and perspectives, conflicts will inevitably occur. However, a woman now seeks to deal with conflict in ways that can strengthen rather than sever connections. This perspective elevates non-violence, the injunction against hurting, to a principle governing all moral judgement and action.

The development of an ethic of care is informed by an increasing differentiation of self and other and a growing comprehension of the dynamics of social interaction. The three perspectives provide a progressively more adequate understanding of the psychology of human relationships. The fact that the self and other are interdependent and interconnected form the central insight and recognition. Just as the incidence of violence in the end is destructive to all, the activity of care enhances both others and self.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule

Women's experiences as learners and knowers, as well as their changing concepts of self and relationships were investigated by Belenky et al. (1986). They interviewed 135 women from diverse class, age, ethnic and educational backgrounds. The questions addressed "self-image, relationships of importance, education and learning, real-life decisionmaking and moral dilemmas, accounts of personal changes and growth, perceived catalysts for change and impediments to growth, and visions of the future." (p. 11). The theories of Gilligan on moral and identity development and William Perry on epistemological development provided the foundation for their study. They included questions developed by Gilligan about self-definition and morality in order to explore the connection between ways of knowing and identity and ethical development.

Through contextual analysis, five ways of knowing or epistemological perspectives were identified, though they warn these are not necessarily "fixed, exhaustive or universal" nor reflect stage-like qualities. Relying on the retrospective accounts from the women interviewed they speculated about a developmental sequence.

Silence. The first perspective is silence. Women feel powerless; they are subdued and passive. Life is seen in terms of polarities. It is almost impossible for them to describe themselves, even physically. When they do, it is in terms of their own movements in and around the geographic space that surrounds them. These women have no vantage point outside of the self, thus they are unable to look backward or reflect upon their whole self. The future is not even considered. The parents of these women were described

as unpredictable and chaotic; women told stories of abandonment, alcoholism and violence.

Received Knowledge. The next perspective is received knowledge in which the women listen to the voices of others. They look to others for self-knowledge; the self is seen only as mirrored by them. Living up to the expectations and images of other people, particularly authorities, is central. These women's attempts at self-definition are organized around social expectations defined through concrete social and occupational roles. Thinking is in either/or terms, which make it difficult to think about growth and development. Consequently, self-description tends to be static. According to these women, their parents usually engaged in "one-way" conversation, without trying to really understand or listen to the opinions and feelings of their daughters.

Subjective Knowledge. Half of all the women interviewed were considered part of the following group, subjective knowers. This perspective reflects a quest for self and a severance of connections. Women begin to question the selflessness of received knowing. Almost all of the women are actively and obsessively preoccupied with a choice between self and other--acting on behalf of the self as opposed to denying the self and living for and through others. The development of the self may be at the expense of others and without thinking through consequences. For many there is a negative identity--defining the self in terms of opposition to others or what one is not. It is not uncommon for women to become anti-male. Belenky et al.'s findings differ with Gilligan's at this point.

Eventhough the self is now included, they do not exhibit a coherent, reflective moral maturity.

This severance of connections has its impact on conceptions of the self. There is a lack of grounding in a secure, integrated, enduring self-concept. Once they have distanced themselves from family and community, women may experience confusion and a sense of loss of themselves. Belenky et al. note that if women define themselves in the context of relationships, then a state of flux would be likely when those relationships are severed. However, I maintain that there is a difference between being defined in the context of relationships and by relationships. One can have a clear and well-defined sense of self and be interrelateded with others. In this case it seems that women relied on others to provide their sense of self and therefore would experience a greater loss and bewilderment when those who provided their identity are removed. This may also be the first time women are really beginning to think for themselves.

Belenky et al., cite an openness to change and a motivation toward strength, optimism and self-value in the subjective knowers. Throughout, a basic commitment and responsiveness to others remains, though they may insist on "going it alone" and being isolated from others. Sustaining connections to others is still weaved into their stories, along with the concern for not hurting feelings. Observation and listening are the primary means for the articulation and differentiation of the self.

Belenky et al. also found that most of the subjective knowers come from chaotic, "disadvantaged," or very permissive families. Many have been betrayed by people in authority, especially men. This group of women often reported experiences of sexual abuse and harassment.

Procedural Knowledge. The fourth perspective is of procedural knowledge. These women are beginning to break out of systems where they have subordinated themselves to the demands of authorities. There is the need to detach themselves from these relationships and institutions. In this transition, women discuss feelings of being selfish as they claim their own voice since their sense of identity is still weak. They are able to criticize the system, but only in the system's terms and according to its standards. Their sense of self is still reliant on external sources and standards, institutions, disciplines and methods.

While subjective and procedural knowers share the need to question and reject some people and structures that have constrained or subordinated their own thinking and development, there are several distinctions. Procedural knowers tend to be bright, White, the most privileged, young (late teens to mid-twenties), in or graduated from prestigious colleges and comfortable in the academic world. There is frequently the presence of fairly benign authorities which allowed them to retain a trust in authority. Old ways of knowing are often challenged in ways that encourage exploration and creativity. Women gain the power of reason and objective thought. Belenky et al. describes these women

as practical and pragmatic who take control of their lives in a planned and deliberate manner.

Constructed Knowledge. The last perspective is the constructed knower. In an effort to reclaim their self, these women want to integrate intuition and knowledge from others, rational and emotive thought, and objective and subjective knowing. There is a need to create one's own frameworks, no longer relying on the perspectives and systems of authorities. Constructed knowers have a high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity. No longer is there either/or thinking; no longer is there the suppression or denial of aspects of the self in order to avoid conflict or simplify life. These women recognize that all knowledge is a construction and that truth depends on context. Only the constructed knowers are really able to open up their minds and hearts in experiencing and comprehending the world.

This perspective is associated with a great deal of intense self-reflection and self-analysis. There is the desire to embrace and integrate all aspects of the self into an ultimate sense of wholeness. There is the capacity to attend to other people and feel related to them despite great differences. Moral decisions are based on caring with an effort to understand the conflict from each person's perspective and context and resolve it in the best way for all involved. The women describe "real talk" which is characterized by reciprocity and cooperation not domination. Moral and spiritual dimensions of their lives become paramount. Moral commitments include a conviction that "one must act" and a responsibility to a larger community in which one lives. Both procedural and con-

structed knowers told similar stories about their family lives. Compared to the other women, these groups talked most of care, mutuality, connection and reciprocity. None of the fathers had completely abandoned the father-daughter relationship, relationships with their mother were seen as intimate and collegial and most of the mothers were deeply committed to work outside the family.

These findings suggest a sequence which vacillates between a self/inner and an other/outer focus until a kind of integration is found. Silent women feel selfless, received knowers look to others for truth and self-definition while subjective knowers turn inward and experience a private sense of knowing. Procedural knowers turn outward again by looking to agreed upon ways of knowing and measuring themselves according to external standards, though now with a sense of control and ability to compete. Constructed knowers create their own unique perspective and have an authentic voice based on their inner wisdom as well as learnings from others.

For the most part, the sequence postulated by Belenky parallels Gilligan's with the exception of a perspective or position (procedural knowers) between being other-focused (Gilligan mode two and Belenky's received knowers) and interdependent (Gilligan mode three and Belenky's constructed knowers). Table 1 illustrates these two sequences. Women may need the opportunity to be self-focused again in order to develop a clearer sense of self-identity so that they are able consider themselves as equal partners in interdependent relationships. This sequence has been hypothesized by other developmental theorists such as Schaef (1981) and Kegan (1982).

TABLE 1

**DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCES:
GILLIGAN AND BELENKY, ET AL.**GilliganBelenky, et al.

1st perspective: "survival"

Silent knowers

2nd perspective: "goodness"

Received knowers

Subjective knowers
Procedural knowers

3rd perspective: "truth"

Constructed knowers

Summary

From the review of the literature on morality and the construction of self and relationships, it seems clear that listening to the voices of women has provided new dimensions to theories of human development. There are additional ways of constructing reality and making meaning of one's experience. Women tend to prefer a morality of care which recognizes the fundamental interdependence between themselves and others and the responsibility to provide care and prevent hurt. Women strive to maintain connection and relationships as they develop their own voice and identity. However, the current social ideology and social conditions can inhibit this self-development.

It also seems clear that women do not speak with a unified voice. While there tends to be some consistent gender differences in moral orientation and conceptions of self and other, women's ways of experiencing themselves and their world are hardly uniform or static.

Belenky et al., in their study of diverse women, intended to address the similar experiences and common ground women share regardless of background. Gilligan's abortion study can be seen in the same light. Certainly, in such a new vein of research, this is needed-- and there is much more to be done. Nevertheless, the differences among women have yet to be explored. This study's focus on Afro-American women will contribute to the examination of the effect of race and ethnicity on women's construction of self and relationships.

The feminist scholars discussed in this section have provided excellent models for uncovering and discussing people's experiences. Their methods can be useful in investigating the perspectives of Afro-American women. Eventhough the primary purpose of this study was to explore cultural differences in women's sense of self and the connection between self and other, I have expanded on a couple of additional aspects that have been addressed in other studies. One was to move beyond simply an interpersonal notion of a connected or separate self and to include a more ontological perspective, sense of being in the world. Second, was to consider how women bring the values and notions of self and other within moral orientations to dealing with differences between themselves and others, whether or not they consider the issue a moral conflict or dilemma.

The specific research questions addressed in this study are:

How do these Afro-American women's conceptions of self and relationships compare with other women's responses in similar research?

Sense of Self

1. What are these Afro-American women's self-conceptions?
 - a. How do they describe themselves?
 - Do they use terms denoting connection and/or separation?
 - If not, or in addition, what terms or concepts do they use?

- b. How are these women's senses of self or identity reflected in these descriptions?

Sense of Self in Relation/Relationships

2. How do these Afro-American women conceptualize the connection between self and others?
 - a. How do they negotiate interpersonal differences?
 - Do they use terms denoting care and/or justice?
 - If not, or in addition, what terms or concepts do they use?
 - b. How do these women conceptualize their sense of self or identity in relationship with others?

Ontology

3. How do these Afro-American women describe their ontological perspectives (sense of being in the world)?
 - a. Do these reflect separate and/or connected orientations?
 - If not, or in addition, what terms or concepts do they use?

A complete description of the methodological theory and procedures will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter will describe the design and methods used in this study. The rationale and theoretical basis of this methodology will be discussed. Next, the process of participant selection will be outlined. Then, the style and content of the interview will be reviewed, including a discussion some of the issues in doing this cross-racial research. Finally, the procedures for data analysis and ways of establishing trustworthiness and accountability will be described.

The use of qualitative methods is an integral part of this study. As noted earlier, they parallel and are consistent with the theory and content of this research. Feminist methodologies share many of the same assumptions and values as the qualitative paradigm. The naturalist or qualitative paradigm maintains that inquiry is value-bound, "specifically, that it is influenced by the values of the inquirer, by the axioms or assumptions underlying both the substantive theory and the methodological paradigm that undergird the inquiry and by the values that characterize the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 161).

The naturalist paradigm assumes that the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable, that realities are multiple and constructed, and that meaning must be considered in context. Qualitative methods and inductive analyses are more adaptable to dealing with and identifying multiple realities and contextual

factors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As a result of inductive analysis comes "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), theory that follows from the data rather than preceding them. This is echoed by Du Bois in her discussion of feminist research, "To address women's lives and experiences in their own terms, to create theory grounded in the actual experience and language of women is the central agenda for feminist social science and scholarship" (1983, p. 19).

A qualitative approach to data collection and analysis seemed most appropriate for this study since the aim was to better understand the perspectives and constructions of this group of Afro-American women. I wanted to come to know how they thought about themselves and their relationships in their own language and from their own frame of reference.

Selection of the Respondents

Participants were selected through purposive sampling (Sellitz, 1959). Respondents were chosen on the basis of certain criteria with no attempt to randomize the population. The criteria for selection were: 1) Self-identified Black women from predominantly African descent, 2) at least 21 years old, 3) born and raised in the United States, and 4) willingness to be involved in this study. Within the stated criteria, an effort was made to include a diverse group of women according to age, socio-economic class, occupation, relationship status and parental status. A diverse group of Afro-American women was sought in order to hear a range of experiences. Since race and ethnicity is the focus of this study, any similarities or common themes that arise could then more likely be

attributed to these cultural characteristics. It was particularly difficult to find women who did not have children and who did not work in the field of human services. This may reflect both the reality of Black culture as well as the limitations of my participant selection network.

Based on the above criteria, 12 Afro-American women were selected to participate in this study. They range in age from 28 to 59. Five of the women are single and seven are married or living with a partner. Nine have children. They are all currently living in New England although they grew up and have lived in different parts of the United States. Three grew up in the South, two in the Midwest and seven in the Northeast. The women were involved in a range of occupations which included: nurse, social worker, custodian, student, human resource consultant, retail associate, psychologist, assembler, program coordinator, homemaker, temporary office and factory worker, and director of a community agency. While not explicitly asked, based on responses and lifestyle, all the women seem to be heterosexual. A summary of some demographic features of the respondents can be found in Table 2 Pseudonyms have been used.

The participants were identified through personal communication. Initially, potential participants were suggested by Black friends and colleagues. Subsequent referrals came from the women who were interviewed. Generally, the potential participant was first contacted by the woman who was referring her. Most of the participants were very helpful in contacting and helping to arrange additional interviews. None of the participants were

TABLE 2
DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Relationship Status</u>	<u>Child- ren</u>	<u>Religion</u>
Mary	28	Some college	\$10-19,999	Remarried	3	None
Carol	54	Master's	50,000+	Married	5	Protestant
Teresa	31	Some graduate	20-29,999	Single	None	Catholic
Barbara	34	Some college	30-49,999	Married	3	Protestant
Judy	41	Some college	10-19,999	Sep.Div.	2	Prot./Bap.
Alice	31	Master's	20-29,999	Live with partner	ex- pecting	Baptist
Toni	42	Some graduate	30-49,999	Married	2	Protestant
Nora	29	Some college	10-19,999	Remarried	2	Baptist
Felice	59	Some college	10-19,999	Married	3	Protestant
Joan	41	Master's	10-19,999	Single	2	Baptist
Jean	28	Some college	10-19,999	Sep./Div.	2	Baha'i
Adele	57	Some college	10-19,999	Single	None	Catholic

previously known to me. Appointments for the interview were set up by telephone.

Content and Style of the Interview

The interviews were held at a time and place convenient for the participants. This was usually at their home or workplace. The interviews lasted approximately one and one-half hours and were audio tape recorded.

During the initial phone contact and upon arriving for the interview, I explained the nature and general purpose of the study, and talked a little about my own background and interest in this topic. The women were asked to sign a written consent form which briefly explained the study, described how the interview material would be used, and assured confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study. (See Appendix A).

Interview Questions

Open-ended interviews were conducted using a general interview guide approach (Patton, 1980). While similar questions were asked of each participant, women could respond in their own terms from their own frame of reference. The interview questions used in this study (See Table 3) were derived from the following sources. Questions one through five which relate to background and self-description were adopted from Belenky et al. (1986). The questions about self-description (questions three through five) had also been

TABLE 3
INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

A. Background

1. Tell me something about what your life is like right now.
--What do you do?
--What do you care about, think about?
2. What stands out for you in your life over the past few years?
--What kind of things have been important?

B. Self-Descriptions

3. How would you describe yourself to yourself?
--If you were to tell yourself who you really are, how would you do that?
--To you, what does it mean to be you?
4. Is the way you see yourself now different from the way you saw yourself in the past?
--What led to the changes?
--Have there been any other turning points?
5. How do you see yourself changing in the future?
--How might these changes occur?
6. When do you feel good about yourself?
--When do you feel bad about yourself?

(continued on next page)

C. Negotiation of Interpersonal Differences

7. Describe a time/situation when what you wanted or expected was different from what someone else wanted or expected.
 - What did you do?
 - How did you decide?
 - What was at stake for you?
 - How do you feel about that decision?

D. Ontology

8. How do you feel about the following statement?
"If you think about life, you realize that each person is a separate individual leading his or her own life."
 - Is there a metaphor or image that comes to mind that describes your perspective?

E. Conclusion

9. Is there anything else related to what we've been talking about that you would like to add?
 - Were there questions you wished I asked?
 - Are there questions you want to ask yourself?
 - Would you have worded any of the questions differently?
 - How did you feel about the interview?
 - Would you have responded differently if you were speaking with a Black woman interviewer?

used by Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983). In the Belenky and Gilligan studies these questions had been asked with women from diverse class and ethnic backgrounds. The use of the same questions would facilitate the creation a common framework and comparison of reponses.

An additional question about self (question six--When do you feel good/bad about yourself?) was included to elicit women's self-evaluations. Previous research has shown that women tend to judge themselves according to their ability to care and take responsibility for their own destiny (Gilligan, 1982; Lyons,1983; Woods, 1986). This question was designed to further explore women's self-appraisals and was derived from Osborne (1987) from his study of adolescent self-concept.

Issues of White Interviewer with Black Participants

The question addressing the negotiation of interpersonal differences (question seven) was adapted from questions used by Gilligan (1982) and others on moral conflict and reasoning. A similar approach was used by Woods in her investigation of relationship crises.

The question about ontology (number 8) was taken from an ideology assessment questionnaire (Ryan, Lykes, and Bertner, 1983). This instrument was used by Lykes (1985), reviewed earlier, to measure one's fundamental belief system. This statement was chosen to elicit beliefs about self and others beyond a soley interpersonal context.

The interview guide was piloted with two Afro-American women acquaintances. During all interviews, clarifying and probing questions were asked.

At the end of each interview, respondents were asked for reactions to the interview experience. The women interviewed reported feeling comfortable with both the style and content of the interview. Some commented that they found it useful in helping them think about personal situations and issues. They were specifically asked if they would have responded differently if they were talking to a Black woman interviewer. Only one woman reported that it might have made a difference, particularly in how she spoke. She said she was speaking in her "Northern White style" and might have spoken in her Southern Black dialect if she felt she would have been understood. All the other women said that they spoke openly and candidly and it would not have mattered to them. After the interview, participants completed a background questionnaire which requested information about her: age, place of birth and growing up, religion, education, income, occupation, relationship status, parents' place of growing up, parents' race, and parents' occupation. (See Appendix B.)

Several concerns are raised when doing cross-cultural research. These issues were carefully considered before I decided to undertake this study. Conventional research often exploits people since knowledge is power that can be used against people from whom the knowledge is generated (Heron, 1981). This is particularly critical when doing cross-cultural work and the researcher is from the dominant culture and the participants are from a dominated

group. Many social scientists have noted the possibility of exploitation and perpetuation of racist prejudices when White people conduct research about People of Color (Guthrie, 1980; Hayes, 1980; White, 1980; Myers, 1982; Roth, 1987).

While there are potential drawbacks and dangers to doing cross-cultural studies, in this case I felt that the importance of hearing from Black women and the likelihood of creating a productive research relationship with these women outweighed the possible pitfalls. For many years I have been involved with issues of human relations, especially women's psychology, cultural diversity and oppression. I have both participated in and led groups on racism and consciousness raising for White people. After discussions with both Black and White friends and colleagues I felt I had sufficient sensitivity and understanding of racism and the experiences of Black women to undertake this study in good conscience. If we are going to develop more inclusive theories, we have to learn how to appropriately conduct cross-cultural research (while also working to increase the number of researchers from underrepresented groups).

While there are disadvantages to having a White interviewer and Black interviewees, there may be some advantages. Although I need to understand the culture in order to engage with the participants and interpret their responses, by not being a member of this racial group, I can offer an outside perspective. Sometimes when we are part of a group and have similar experiences, it is more difficult to see or reflect on our conceptual constructs, assumptions or values as clearly. (This is evident in the research done by White

men critiqued earlier.) By being a woman and being familiar with Black culture, I hope that I have been able to accurately hear what was meant. At the same time, I hope to have had the distance and perspective to notice what seemed unique or particular to each woman and this group of women.

There are several ways I tried to address these cross-cultural concerns. First, qualitative methodology was chosen to allow women to speak for themselves and to minimize the distortion of their voices. As evidenced in the dearth of research (in psychology in particular), most women, especially Black women, have not had the opportunity to tell their story and have their perspectives considered.

Second, establishing a high degree of rapport and trust between researcher and participants is critical in order to insure honesty and openness (Glazer, 1972; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975). On the one hand, participants can be concerned about "pleasing the interviewer" and providing the "correct" answer. I stressed my interest in hearing about their experiences and perspectives and assured them that there was no "right" way to answer the questions. The questions were designed to encourage their own thinking and elicit their own stories.

Since I was White person from academia, there were a number of ways I tried to increase trust and openness. First, I was referred to participants by friends of theirs who had already participated in the interview. I assume that the fact that I was liked and trusted by their Black friend facilitated the research relationship. Second, I talked a little about myself, my interest in this area and my

experience in dealing with multi-cultural and oppression issues. I encouraged their questions and concerns about myself, the interview and the study. Third, I believe the comfort, integrity and respect I brought to this study and interviews set a positive tone and helped establish greater rapport.

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this research is to understand a few women in depth, how they make meaning of their lives in their own terms. The intent is not to make generalizations but to create working hypotheses. "Data, are, so to speak, the constructions offered by or in the sources; data analysis leads to a reconstruction of these constructions" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 332).

The frameworks or lenses for the reconstruction or analysis were drawn from the work reviewed earlier on women's sense of self and self in relation. The interviews were interpreted using the constructs of separate/connected sense of self, and care/justice reasoning. Consistent with Gilligan's philosophy and methodology, the narratives were not "coded" for these constructs. The content was analyzed to understand if and how these concepts of self and relationships applied to how this group of women described and constructed meaning of their experiences.

The coding scheme developed by Lyons (1983) was used as a guideline for analyzing the self-description responses. She identified four main categories, each with specific sub-categories: 1) general and factual, 2) abilities and agency, 3) psychological, and 4) relational component. The relational component included

two sub-groups: connected in relation to others and separate/objective to others. These formed the basis for considering separate and connected constructions of self. (See Appendix C). Gilligan's proposed developmental sequence within an ethic of care which reflects how women construe the relationship between self and other also provided a useful model from which to consider women's identity development.

The manual, "A Guide to Reading Narratives of Moral Conflict and Choice for Self and Moral Voice (1987), developed by Gilligan and colleagues, was used to analyze responses according to care and justice. While the exact reading and analyzing procedures were not followed, the explication of the concepts of care and justice was useful. The following are excerpts taken from the manual which describe each orientation:

The care orientation calls attention to hurt as a moral problem. A web of interdependence is an organizing image for this way of thinking. Concepts such as "being there", listening as a moral act, building and sustaining trust over time, being hurt or troubled by another's pain, shared responsibility for each others' safety and welfare, knowing another well as a result of shared history, and disagreement as strengthening a secure relationship by providing evidence of listening and dependability, point to the need to maintain actively relationships that people can depend on. The value placed on maintaining connection, not hurting, attending, and responding to need are central to what is seen as moral action. These values can call into question a priori or ungrounded judgements.

As a moral orientation, justice carries the injunction not to treat others unfairly. A descriptive characteristic of a justice orientation is that, in solving moral conflicts from this frame, one attends to problems of

inequality and the importance of treating self and others with equal respect.

The "scales of justice" provide an organizing image or metaphor for this way of thinking, drawing attention to the central notion of weighing, balancing, or equalizing claims. Concepts such as reciprocity, redress of grievances, justified punishment, earned reward, punishment in proportion to the crime, contractual obligation, equal or impartial application of the rules, fair exchange for mutual benefit, equal or fair chance, and the right to tell one's "own side of the story" point to the need to maintain or redress a balance. Conflicts can be resolved by "weighing" competing claims, as well as by deciding whether potential negative consequences outweigh positive benefits.

Although some of the interview questions lend themselves to addressing a particular concept (i.e., question three: "Describe yourself" with separate/connected self) because the constructions of self, and self in relationship to others are interrelated, it was not possible to predetermine which concepts or lens would be used to analyze each question. Women's sense of self and conceptions of relationships with others are not distinct categories. As research has shown, women tend to define themselves in relation to others and therefore it is difficult to separate these topics. However, I have chosen to analyze these issues separately both for organizational clarity and to highlight the aspects of their responses which tend to emphasize identity and those which tend to emphasize being in connection to others. I hope this structure enables each area to be more fully elaborated and the relationship between them further clarified.

Particular attention was paid to the ways the participants described their experiences that did not fit with the current

frameworks and offered different conceptualizations of these issues. Using negative case analysis (Kidder, 1981) I began with these formulations and looked for cases that did not fit and continued to make revisions. Other emergent salient themes and issues were also identified and explored.

Three concurrent aspects of qualitative data analysis are outlined by Miles and Huberman (1985). These include data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing and verification. Data reduction "refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data" (p. 23). Data display involves organizing the data to allow conclusion-drawing and action-taking. During conclusion-drawing and verification, meaning is drawn from the reduced, displayed data, and patterns, possible configurations, explanations and regularities are noted. These conclusions are also verified. These three flows of activity are interwoven before, during and after data collection. Miles and Huberman explain,

In this view, the three types of analysis activity and the activity of data collection form an interactive, cyclical process. The researcher steadily moves among these four "nodes" during data collection, then shuttles among reduction, display, and conclusion-drawing/verification for the remainder of the study. (p. 24)

The data in this study were analyzed according to a similar process. Since qualitative data analysis is more iterative or cyclical than sequential, the specific steps followed in this research are difficult to clearly define. In general, first, the interviews were transcribed by a professional typist and transcriber. Then I read the entire transcript while listening to the

audio tape to check for accuracy, remember the tone and inflections, and gain a sense of the whole. The transcripts were read and reread to become familiar with each women's story. Salient themes, those emphasized by an individual women or repeated by several women were noted. Then, the women's responses to each main research question were selected and grouped together. The analytical constructs were used to interpret their responses. Patterns, similarities and differences in conceptualizations also were identified. Salient themes were further explored. Finally, excerpts were selected to illustrate particular perspectives and issues.

Dilemmas and Challenges in the Analysis and Presentation of the Data

In both the analysis and the presentation of the data there were many challenges and choice-points in determining how to best honor and reflect the perspectives of this group of women. Indemic to this type of qualitative research is the need to deconstruct the stories of each woman and apply some kind of organizational or interpretive framework. How to do this without objectifying the participants, losing the integrity and complexity of each woman's story was especially difficult. I will briefly discuss some of the dilemmas I faced in this process, which I was comforted to know are shared by others doing this kind of research (Cf. Acker, et al., 1983).

In this study, it was impossible to discuss each woman in depth. I struggled with the balance between wanting to tell each woman's story versus illustrating a concept. Though I initially tried to just focus on the main research questions and salient themes, using quotes from a variety of women, I found that any sense of the

whole person got lost. It was impossible to see the same woman's response to different questions as well as to compare her perspective to other women. I then attempted to group the women according to some criteria, in this case--sense of self. While this ultimately felt like the best approach, I had (and still do have) some concern that these categories do not completely reflect the reality of their experience and that their uniqueness gets compromised.

Choosing what to include or leave out, otherwise known as "the agony of omission" (Patton, 1980) was especially hard. Each time the data was "reduced" and a particular excerpt chosen, I felt as though other important aspects were left behind. In fact each time I returned to the original or longer edited version of the transcript, I felt pulled to include more in the analysis. I also grew more attached to and compelled by their narratives. I was consistently torn by deciding what was central and integral to the focus of the research and could be considered emergent themes, and what were other fascinating, though less relevant, issues. I attempted to selectively excerpt their quotes so they would not be too long and cumbersome for the reader, yet I wanted to protect the individuality, tone and context of their responses. The awareness of the power of the researcher to manipulate the data was everpresent.

Another challenge I was less prepared for was the amount I relied on my "intuition" or the frustration of only being able to use the words from the transcripts to substantiate an interpretation. Because I have had the opportunity to know and talk with these women, I have had the experience of seeing their homes/offices, appearance, tone, affect and non-verbal behaviors as they told their

stores. Yet, when it came time to analyze the data, I felt constrained by only being able to draw on their black and white words. Sometimes people say similar things but it feels and sounds very different. I needed a way to honor both my impressions of the women and what they actually said. I also came to know the transcripts intimately so that some of my feeling for the women was also drawn from that ingrained information. At times when needing to group the women or decide on themes, I allowed myself to see what emerged from my sense of the women and the interviews and then more carefully examined the data. I do not think that this is "unscientific," but more in line with how most people come to know and consistent with feminist theory what suggests the use of both intuition and logic in doing research.

Accountability and Trustworthiness

There are several ways I established accountability and trustworthiness appropriate to qualitative research. These included: 1) credibility (analogous to internal validity), 2) transferability (analogous to external validity), 3) dependability (analogous to reliability), and 4) confirmability (analogous to objectivity); (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Credibility was established through prolonged engagement--spending sufficient time with participants to establish trust and allow the women to discuss their experiences and perceptions. Peer debriefing and negative case analysis was also used. To increase transferability, "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) are provided which will enable someone interested in making a transfer,

sufficient information, description and context to determine whether that is appropriate and whether my analysis seems accurate. The degree of transferability depends of the similarity between context or the degree of fittingness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

An audit trail, a record of the process of how decisions and analyses were made was maintained to establish dependability and confirmability. Finally, to enhance over trustworthiness, I kept a reflexive journal to record, reflect on and process the personal, logistical and methodological issues and insights that arose in doing this study.

In the next chapter, the data will be presented. The presentation of the data includes frequent direct and lengthy quotations from the interviews. This is done for several reasons which are consistent with this methodology. First, this allows women to speak for themselves in their own words. Second, the integrity of their whole story is better preserved. Lastly, thick description is provided which gives adequate context from which to understand their meaning and draw one's own analysis.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the data collected from the interviews are analyzed and presented. This chapter is divided into four sections which correspond to the three main research questions: 1) What are these Afro-American women's self-conceptions? 2) How do these Afro-American women conceptualize the connection between self and others? 3) How do these Afro-American women describe their ontological perspectives (sense of being in the world)? The fourth section addresses emergent themes.

Section One focusses on conceptions of self--women's self-definitions and senses of self in relation to others. Also discussed are factors related to the development of their self-identity. Section Two addresses the issue of relationships and women's conception of the connection between self and other. In this section, general orientations toward others and negotiations of interpersonal differences are described. Ontological perspective is the focus of Section Three. This includes the degrees to which women essentially see themselves as separate and connected to other people. Additional emergent themes will be the topic of Section Four.

The women have been divided into four groups based on their self-conceptions: 1) survivalists, 2) self-discoverers, 3) self-oriented carers, and 4) mutualists. Within each section, these groups form the basic structure for presenting the women's

responses. Salient issues and commonalities across groups, as well as women's individual responses from each grouping, are reported.

These groupings emerged from the analysis of the data. It was not my intent to necessarily identify different groupings or possible developmental positions, though the work of Gilligan and Belenky, et al., certainly underlie this research. After initially analyzing the data according to the main themes and issues for each research question, it became clear that the women tended to respond to these questions differently and that certain women tended to respond in similar ways to each other. Some women discussed past ways of experiencing the world that were current perspectives for other women. In order to better understand the relationship of these women to each other I began to look more critically at the similarities and differences in sense of identity and sense of self in relation. Three groupings were identified fairly easily (later to be called the survivalists, self-explorers and mutualists. However, these did not encompass all the women. Through both attempting to identify specific qualities and criteria, and intuitive processes, a fourth group was formed. It seemed that most of these women who were difficult to place, in fact shared some common ways of describing themselves which led to the formation of an additional group (later to be named the self-oriented carers). Within these four groupings, all the women could reasonably be placed.

While I ultimately decided to name the group, I did so with some reservation. I resisted giving the groups names since I hesitated to "label" them and imply judgement. It is impossible to describe very complex people and perspectives in a single word or

two. However, in order to help refer to and keep track of the different grouping, I created names which attempt to capture a salient aspect of the perspectives of that group of women.

Section One: Sense of Self

This section will focus on the first research question, "What are women's self-conceptions?" I will first present the ways women described themselves and apply the notions of separate and connected sense of self to their self-descriptions. I will then present the different ways women defined themselves, according to the four groupings. Finally, I will illustrate some other themes and issues related to identity that arose as women described themselves and their process of growth and change.

Self-Definitions

The words the women most often used to describe themselves were "independent," "sensitive" (to other people and their needs), "nice," "caring," "trustworthy" and "giving." However, their descriptions included aspects from the four categories of self-descriptions identified by Lyons (1983): general and factual; abilities and agency; psychological; and relational. (See Appendix C). The general and factual information, included physical appearance (i.e., "overweight," "physically attractive") and roles (i.e., mother, daughter, wife, housewife). Terms connoting abilities and agency, such as "creative," "intelligent," "tenacious," were the least represented and used by only a few women.

The self-descriptors most frequently referred to psychological characteristics. These ranged from words like "optimistic," "fun loving," "happy" and "flexible," to "impatient," "aggressive," "confused," "strong," and "independent." Many of these self-descriptions reflected qualities involved in relationships such as "nice," "thoughtful," "easy to get along with," "honest," "open" and "lovable."

When women defined themselves in relational terms they predominantly used words connoting connection. In addition to "sensitive," "caring," "trustworthy" and "giving," indicated above as popular terms, they spoke of "nurturing," "helping people," "sharing," "being a good listener" and being "unselfish." Only a few words were used which reflected a separate/objective sense of self-- "dependable," "loyal," "fair" and "judgemental" (able to judge the type of person).

Sense of Self in Relation to Others

In these women's stories of self-definition and identity development several issues were raised. They expressed an interest, commitment and need for their own growth and development, even though this was not always supported by others. A primary consideration was how their growth would affect their family, especially their children. Several of these women had children when they were in their late teens and early twenties and did not pursue their own education and career due to family commitments. Many of the women have just recently begun to examine their own sense of self and explore their own desires.

In responding to the questions about their past and present sense of self, most of the women spontaneously began talking about themselves in relation to others and discussed how their own identity was tied to how they related to others. The ways in which they considered themselves in relation to others reflected and affected their own sense of self and growth. Most common and central to their lives was the relationship between the needs and concerns of self and the needs and concerns of others.

While there was this similar theme, the women in this study had different perspectives of self-identity in relation to others. Four general viewpoints were suggested by their responses. Each perspective will be discussed with excerpts from the women in this study. This will illustrate the particular viewpoint, as well as demonstrate the differences and the uniqueness of each woman within that group.

These four perspectives, for the most part, correspond with Gilligan's model of identity development, which was reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. The sequence outlined by Gilligan is of the development of self within an ethic of care and was derived from her study of morality. While this research was not investigating morality, the perspectives she described relate to the ways the women in this study described their sense of self and identity. It was not my intent to investigate development per se. So, though Gilligan's framework is useful and there seems to be some evidence for a developmental sequence among these four perspectives, I am not claiming that these are necessarily developmental positions.

I will borrow Gilligan's metaphor of the web and use it to conceptualize these women's different perspectives of self. Their constructions of Self (S) in relation to Others (O), and their focus of attention within that relationship, will be symbolically represented. In addition to the narrative description, this will help illustrate each group's predominant sense of self. Table 4 provides a summary of the groupings along with some demographic information.

Eventhough relationships will be discussed, since they are integral to the ways women defined themselves, the focus of this section is self-identity. The excerpts are taken from their responses to the questions in the first part of the interview guide on sense of self (and in some cases from the opening questions about their life right now and important events and issues of the past few years). Relationships, interpersonal negotiation and the connection between self and others will be examined in depth in the next section.

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TABLE 4

**FOUR GROUPINGS ACCORDING TO SENSE OF SELF IN RELATION
TO OTHER WITH DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Survivalists

Felice	59	Some college	\$10-19,000	Married	3 Children
Mary	28	Some college	10-19,000	Remarried	3 Children

Self-Discoverers

Barbara	34	Some college	30-49,000	Married	3 Children
Nora	29	Some college	10-19,000	Remarried	2 Children

Self-Oriented Carers

Adele	57	Some college	10-19,000	Single	No Children
Jean	28	Some college	10-19,000	Sep/Div.	2 Children
Joan	41	Master's	10-19,999	Single	2 Children
Judy	41	Some college	10-19,999	Sep/Div.	2 Children

Mutualists

Alice	31	Masters	20-29,000	Live with partner	Expecting
Carol	54	Masters	50,000 +	Married	5 Children
Teresa	31	Some grad.	20-29,000	Single	No Children
Toni	42	Some grad.	30-49,000	Married	2 Children

family and other people, and often social issues. It is against this backdrop that their self-definitions must be heard.

Survivalists. While a concern for personal growth and development, and balancing the needs of self and other were most characteristic of the women in this study, two women consistently responded with an alternative perspective. The stories of Mary and Felice tended to reflect a slightly different way of thinking about themselves and others. They centered their attention primarily on their own basic needs and on being independent (taking care of themselves). Their descriptions tended to be concrete and situational. Of all the women in this study, they have some of the least formal education or training and are not involved in work they consider careers. Nevertheless, a relational sense of self is reflected in their self-descriptions and their perspective is encompassed within an ethic of care.

Mary and Felice tended to respond in ways similar to a Level One perspective according to Gilligan's model. In this mode, self is the sole concern. Women are unreflective and constrained by their lack of power. Relationships are seen as disappointing or potentially hurtful. To protect themselves from hurt, some women choose isolation.

Felice and Mary. Felice is 59 and works as an assembler in a factory. Mary is 28, does temporary office and factory work, and takes care of her children. Instead of psychological concepts, Felice and Mary described themselves almost exclusively in broad, general terms and roles.

Felice: Well, I am a very independent Black woman. I really am. Sometimes I hate myself for being that way. But I am. And I can't help it....

[How else would you describe yourself?]

I don't know. I don't know other than I don't know, just. I don't try to be something that I'm not. I am what I am....

[And who are you?]

I'm Felice Arlene Owens. Used to be a beautiful Black woman. But those days are in the past. But I still take what I've got and do the best I can with it. Mmm-mmm. Even though my legs bother me so much I can't hardly walk, but I still get dressed and feel proud of myself. I really do. I always will feel that way about myself. Nothing and nobody will make me feel any different than just proud of me--whatever I am, whoever I am. It's like I've always told my kids. I said, whatever you be in life, be the best, whatever it is. And that's what I've always tried to be. I've always tried to be a good wife. Tried to be a good child growing up, because it wasn't easy, you know, without a mother and a father. But I did the best I could. And I tried to be a good wife. And I'm not bragging on myself but I know I've been a good mother.

Felice's self-description included a relational perspective-- being a good child, wife and mother. This is also evident in Mary's response though she also expressed confusion about her own identity:

[Chuckles] Confused. That's basically what I could tell you right now. I've got a lot of things on my mind. Too many things are working on my

mind at the same time.Everything's a big confusion. I think once we get to the point where everything is at a level where we can deal with it day by day, on a daily routine, I think we'll be better off. But right now...

So what kinds of things are you feeling confused about?

Well, number one, the kids. Number two, living here and trying to get out of here. Get my kids in a better school. Me get a better job, a better income, a better neighborhood. My husband will be able to get a decent job. I want to be able to live and live like they say, like normal people do [laughs] (Whoever they are). Really, I've only met like really one, but the things I'm really looking forward to.

[Any other ways you would describe yourself to yourself?]

No. I get along with everybody. I don't have too many friends. I know a lot of people, but I'm just the type of person where I don't bother anybody, they don't bother me. I don't know [laughs]. I really, I have no idea. I really don't know what to tell you about that.

[If you were to tell yourself who you really are?]

I've asked myself that on many days [laughs]. Who am I? I don't know. To tell you the truth, me, I'm just here, like everybody else is, trying to live. Who am I? I don't know. A mother, a housewife. I can't say I'm a businesswoman, because I'm not there yet. I can't consider myself a businesswoman. I'm just, I'd consider myself a business woman if I had a permanent job, something to look forward to. I'm just here for my kids and my husband, and that's about all I can do right about now. That's about it [laughs].

The sense of independence, isolation and attitude of "I don't bother anybody and they don't bother me," conveyed by both Mary and Felice, was expressed throughout the interview.

[What does it mean to be independent?]

Felice: Don't wanna depend on anybody for anything. And I was taught you don't talk about people, you talk about places and things, you know. And then when these things get back to the other person, you know, you said it all. And I can't live like that. Can't stand that confusion. So, I just more or less be by myself. I go to church and I speak to the people. I talk. I sing in the choir. And then I come home. I don't really have nobody that I call no friend. I really don't. Because they're hard to find. Very deceiving. So I just more or less be by myself.

Mary initially answered the question about having different wants or expectations from someone else by saying:

[pause] I really couldn't say because mostly what I want and what I expect I have to do on my own.I like to do things that eases my mind, not somebody elses. I like to do things on my own. I like to do them at my own pace and in my own time. I don't like to be pushed and things like that.

When she referred to her difficulty in getting adjusted to her new husband's helpfulness and accepting his assistance she said:

.... It's just that I have to get used to it, because I've had a lot of bad things in my past, so it's not easy for me to give in so easily. It takes a lot. It's like trying to break open a brick.

While many women mentioned difficulties and painful experiences, for Mary and Felice these experiences seemed to be in the forefront of their stories. In the opening questions which asked

about their lives at present and over the past few years, Mary and Felice had similar immediate responses.

[When you think about your life over the past few years...]

Mary: Miserable.

[I was going to say "What stands out for you?"]
[both laugh]

Miserable. I've had a very hard few years. I've been married before, divorced.

[And how long ago was this?]

About seven and a half years ago. In the past seven and a half years I've had a few ups and downs. I've been in and out of the hospital. I've had a couple of bad experiences with relationships and just got to the point where I decided to stay single for two years [chuckles] and get things working back to normal again. But these past few years it has been hard. Now things are, they're still a little shaky, but they're better than they used to be.

I consider my past being miserable, dealing with the constant moving and the different schools, the racial problems. The problems at home, the problems with my marriage and my past relationships. As long as I'm by myself and be able to deal with my children and myself, I'm fine.

[Tell me about what your life is like now.]

Felice: Um. Right now my life is very, very oppressing, you know. Like I lost a son in '86. That same day I lost my younger son, and my oldest one had an accident. I got the news about six hours apart. And since that time, you know, my life really hasn't been the same. But I'm trying to go on. Yeah. It's hard but what can I say? It's just so hard, you know, cause I'd like to get on disability. I

need to. I got a very bad back and my legs, but I tried twice and they said, no. They said I could try again with a lawyer. But, hey, it seems that they already made up their mind. So...

Felice did not name any ways she saw herself differently from the past except for physical and health changes. Change in the future was going South to live with her sisters. Mary talked about being calmer than in the past and that being on her own helped. She saw future changes as getting a house and her husband getting a better job. In response to, "Any particular ways you see you yourself changing?" she replied by repeating her central concrete concern.

Other than getting older? [laughs] Probably not.
I really don't see myself changing.

The only thing I can think of is just right now,
my basic main concern is getting a home.
[In part so her children could go outside and
play without fighting.]

While Felice responded that she felt good about herself "all the time" and said that she loved "everything about me," Mary was unable to think of when she felt good about herself. External circumstances, she believed, made it impossible for her to feel positive about herself.

I haven't yet [chuckles]. I have not yet. You can't feel good about yourself when you're not happy where you are, happy with what you've got. I could say I felt good about myself when I felt better for those 2 years that I spent with my kids. I was able to think about a lot of things that I needed to do, and a lot of those things that I needed to do are slowly but surely coming about.

Both Felice and Mary focused on not relying on others and taking care of their own immediate needs. There were similarities in their experiences with pain and survival and their conceptions of self in relation to others. Their separateness and sense of isolation does not seem to be an ideal self-chosen lifestyle and philosophy but a reaction to their hurt and disappointment in relationships. Disconnection seems easier and safer than connection.

Self-Discoverers. According to Gilligan, in the Second Level, women are concerned with "goodness" which is equated with the care of others and self-sacrifice. Taking responsibility for others and gaining their acceptance is central. Women in this mode also try to avoid conflict and shy away from direct expression. In the transition from this level to the next, women begin to realize the limitations of this self-sacrifice and try to be responsive to and encompass the needs of both self and others. This second mode and the transition was highlighted by the perspectives of Barbara and Nora. Their self-descriptions reflected their newly developing identities.

Barbara. Barbara is 34, and recently stopped working as a nurse. Unlike some of the other respondents, Barbara did not use self-reflective psychological terms to describe herself. She relied primarily on her roles in relation to other people:

I would say is that I am a mother. I am a mother, and a wife. I think that I'm a nice person. I'm overweight but that's ok. I've come to terms with that [laughs]. I'm a daughter.

Barbara described a series of personal changes in her quest to find out more about who she is. She explained that since she got

married right after high school, had a child two years later and has been working and going to school on and off, she never really had time to find out who she was. She is now trying to let go of needing to be perfect and to always please others.

....So I never really had time to find out who I am and what I really want, other than to have this family that I have. So what I'm doing is I'm just trying to find out who I am and what I want to do.

One problem that I've had most of my life is people pleasing. I've always tried to please other people. I tried to be this perfect daughter, perfect granddaughter, perfect sister, perfect wife, perfect mother. And I'm no longer trying to do that. This past year I've stopped doing that. I just said, "Well, I'm not perfect, and therefore they have to either accept me as I am or forget about it." And I feel good about that. And it took me a long time to get to this point. I mean it really, really did. So I'm still all those things. I'm still a daughter, a sister, but I don't try to be a perfect one anymore.

....I was a doormat. I was literally a doormat. Whatever someone wanted, I did. And it didn't matter whether I was tired or it didn't matter. As my husband would say, one of my friends would call and say "Barbara, I need you," and I'm up and gone. And that's me. It's hard for me to say no to them still today, but not like it used to be. I was a doormat. Therefore people just did whatever they wanted, and I let them. I literally let them just walk all over me, and I no longer do that. And I haven't had an assertiveness class yet either. I'm planning to take one [laughs] because I need to get better at this, because it is hard to say no.

Barbara no longer wants to base her giving on gaining the acceptance of others. She still does for others but now she starts to include the need for mutuality.

....It really is hard for me to say no because I'm people pleasing again. I want this person to like me and sometimes, now not all the time, I'll say well like with my cousin, I'll say, well maybe she can watch my kids one weekend or do this or that for me, you know? So I don't feel so bad about that. I don't feel that's wrong because I think that women need to do those things for one another, especially if they have children, and she's a single parent. So I don't think anything's wrong with if I do for you, you'll do for me, or whatever.

When asked what led to these changes she explained that she had been trying to do everything--work full-time and take care of her family. She finally got so exhausted that she was sent home from work for a week and sought counseling. Barbara also illustrated another characteristic of the second perspective, confusing the responsibility for one's own and others' feelings.

I feel more comfortable with myself today. I don't expect so much from myself. And I don't blame myself for everything that goes wrong in my life. If my husband and I have an argument, there was a time I'd think it was all my fault. I wouldn't tell him it was all my fault, but I honestly felt inside it was all my fault. And there were times when he'd actually get upset and yell and storm off, and I'd be upset and I'd say, "Oh, I don't want him angry" because I never wanted people angry with me. I've never wanted that. Well today I figure, if you're angry, you're angry. And that's ok, because it's just an emotion. I read that just a few weeks ago. It's just an emotion. He's angry. So what?

Both a catalyst and a result of her changing sense of self is the way she dealt with her husband's drug use. She set limits which considered her own (and her children's) self-interest and clarified the issue of responsibility.

Well, there's one important piece to all of this. My husband has been using drugs for the past few years. It's something that I totally denied and it has been in this past year that I realized what he's been doing. And that's been where most of the money's been going, and I couldn't take that anymore. I actually realized that I couldn't take it anymore. And I said to him this past May, because he was in the hospital in May. He went into treatment, and I said, "Either you go for help and get rid of this problem or you won't have a family here." And that took a lot because I really love him and did not want to not be with him, but I couldn't be with him the way he was.

I go to NarAnon meetings. I've since learned that this is a disease. So since going to these meetings, that's why I feel I think a lot has to do with how I feel now, because I only have this day, and I can't change him, I can't make him stop drugging or drinking. I can't do any of that stuff. The only person I can change is me. And since I've come to realize that, this the person I've been working with.

When asked about how she might change in the future, Barbara expressed concern about balancing and integrating this concern for self, and fear of losing care for others.

Oh, that's scary. I tell you, I don't want to get to the point where I'm so independent that I don't like myself. I don't want to be so assertive, well, not assertive, but just, uh, I can't think of ... I don't want to be mean and nasty. But I don't want to be the the type of person who steps over people to get my needs met either.

[In reference to returning to school, Barbara continued] I'm doing things for me, and I don't want people to rush me into doing things. And I don't want to do things on other people's time table, which is what I've been doing all my life. And it is a little scary, because I don't want to turn into this

mean person, but I do want to get my point across the first time I say it.

In describing the difference between "good independent" and "overly independent," Barbara indicated that the amount of conflict, from which she ultimately suffers, is the determining factor. Her own acceptance of her self-actualization or independence is also tied to its affect on her family. She is able to be "good independent" when she knows her family can care for themselves.

Good independent would be I'd get up in the morning and don't fix anyone breakfast because I don't want to. And they are all capable of fixing something for themselves, even if it's a bowl of cold cereal. I usually get up in the morning and fix breakfast. That would be independent. Overly would be I've always had this desire to go away to school, live in a dorm for a few months. A weekend, like if I went for one of these all day weekend things. If I did that, that would be overly independent. That would be something I couldn't handle myself right now, because I know it would present conflict in my marriage. My husband doesn't want me going away nowhere.

....I guess because one is acceptable with very little conflict, and conflict that I'm able to handle. And the other is conflict that is hard for me to handle.

Independence also seemed to mean feeling like a full adult and making choices about her own life.

But I want to be able to do all the things I want to be able to do because I'm an adult woman. And one of the reasons I married was to get out of my parents' household because they were telling me what to do, so I figured I could tell myself what to do. Well no, I got a husband here who says "Well, I don't want you to..." He doesn't say "No, you can't do that." But he'll say, "I don't want you to do that" or "I'd rather you not do that." Which is still saying,

"Don't do that, Barbara, because it will upset me."
 That's the same thing, you know what I mean?
 That's a conflict that I have a hard time dealing
 with. And that's exactly what it is. It's a
 conflict, because especially when I get to the point
 where I really, really want to do this. And he'll
 "Please don't, I don't want you doing that" and give
 me a thousand reasons why not. And I give in to
 that kind of thing.

[Any other ways you see yourself changing?]

Not right now. There's a lot going on with me right
 now, and I can only handle so much. I know from
 experience that I can only handle just so much. If I
 take on too much, I'm the one that's going to suffer.
 So not right now I don't.

For Barbara, her increased self-esteem and the opportunity to
 make choices for herself outweighed the material sacrifices.

And I have not felt this good about myself since I
 was in high school.This to me is living. This is
 really living. I'm still in debt, I don't have all the
 material things I want, and I want my own home
 and that's something I really want. And I say to
 myself "Well, Barbara, you're the one who stopped
 working. You could have it a little sooner." And I
 say "Well, which do I want more?" And I want this
 more, right now. Since I know I can't have a house
 tomorrow anyway, this I can have right now, today.
 So I'm going to go with this, and I'll get a house one
 day. And if I don't, well, I like me, I really like me.
 And I like who I'm becoming, 'cause I didn't used to
 like me as much as I do now.'

Nora. Nora is 29. She has worked as a physical therapist, but
 is currently working the third shift as a salesperson. Nora
 expressed similar feelings to Barbara of wanting more than just to
 please other people. She described her new ability to stand up for
 herself and receive respect. Whereas Barbara used role related

terms to describe herself Nora initially had difficulty saying who she was in any terms. Her initial response to "How would you describe yourself to yourself?" was:

That's a tough question. I don't know. I never really thought about that. How would I describe me? I don't really know. That's really tough.
(Groan)

[If I was to say, who are you? What does it mean to be you? What would you tell me? What would you tell yourself?]

(Groan) mmmmmmm. (Laugh) Wow! I don't know, that's really.....

[How would you describe yourself?]

Mmmmmmmmm. I would say I was probably--average--I guess. I can't even, I've never really sat down and thought about that. That is a really neat question. Now I'll probably ponder it for awhile. After you're gone I'll probably ponder it forever!

She went on to talk about her struggle to consider and claim her own needs in relationships. Nora expressed her dissatisfaction with continually giving without receiving and not being appreciated for what she gives.

....the thing is that I look at life like this, I don't mind being used; I don't like to be mis-used. And that's really the whole theory around my life. You can use me forever but just don't mis-use me.

[What's the difference? How do you know?]

I mean you can use me, to mis-use me would mean that you just really abused, you came to me, you pumped me for advice, you really reached out into

me and then what happened was when I helped you, you slapped me in the face.

Nora's feelings of bitterness were a sign that perpetually giving to others without mutuality was no longer satisfying.

...I've become stronger. Stronger and, well at some point I get bitter, now, you know, where I didn't before. There was no bitterness there. But it's not bitter because it's a war against another culture. It's bitter because I am tired of people just, you know, I don't want to say mis-use, I don't want to use that term too much. But I am tired of people feeding off of me and feeding off of me and then when I need them, where are they? You know, wait a minute. Remember when your baby needed Pampers at three o'clock in the morning and I got up out of the bed. Now it's seven o'clock in the afternoon and you can't take me to the store because my cars not here. And I just got to that point at one time. And sometimes I get really, really bitter about that.

Her reaction to this bitterness was to become very self-focused and try to ignore the responses of others, though this too was not really comfortable.

You know, it's like, so that is a change that I have made. And I had gotten this attitude at one point a few years ago where, hey, you gotta come into my world. I'm not going into yours. It's welcome into my world or the heck with you. If you don't want to be a part of what I'm all about, forget it. But then, that's not me. You know what I'm saying?

[Do you have a sense of what led to that change?]

What the bitterness? Yeah. I just started to say, wait a minute, if I'm gonna be there for you, you have to be here for me.

...from now on if Nora doesn't want to do it, if it's not something that I feel

comfortable with, forget you. You know, point blank simple. Forget it! I don't want to be bothered. You don't like the way I do things, fine. Don't hang around with me. Don't come around. That's how bad it was. And it's always been an open door thing for me, you know, come, go, no problem, stay a while. But then at that point it was like, you know, and what do I get out of it? I always ended up being short. And I reflect, once again, sometimes I reflect back on that. As all the time I helped those people, I ended up short.

After making these strong statements, Nora began to retreat and rationalize the unequal relationships she just criticized. This speaks to the tenuousness of her new sense of self.

....So, in order for me to get any satisfaction, in order for me not to remain bitter about not having material things out of it, I always say, but even though I don't be rewarded materially, spiritually I'm rewarded. I'm uplifted. Because I know within myself that I have helped. And I know that God knows that I have done the best I could to help you. So, even though you don't come back and you don't bring me back the \$50 that you took from me that I told you was my kid's money for shoes, or whatever, fine, no problem. I'll get over it. But I still at some point now have found myself, more so now with the third shift and the change in your body chemistry, you know having to go through all these different changes because of the schedules and stuff, I find myself being bitter sometimes now. But like I said, I'm not bitter to the point where it's not controllable. I mean I get bitter but I sit back and I say, "Whoa, wait a minute, back up, you know, back up. Somebody had to sacrifice something for you to get here. You got to sacrifice something for somebody else." And then you have kids involved. That takes a big toll on them. You just can't say, I just can't do just anything if I want kids. I can't subject them to a lot of things.

Interspersed with her declarations of herself as priority, in the previous and following passages, Nora still considered her responsibility and ability to care for others, particularly her children. When asked about how she might change in the future, Nora talked about being more selfish. Eventhough in Gilligan's research the term "selfish" was used with a negative connotation, Nora saw being selfish as a positive step in caring for herself.

I think that I might become a little more selfish. I really do. Because, I don't know, and that's not being bitter. I think that's being realistic again. At some point you have to be selfish, you have to stop saying that, wait a minute, she's number one, I just made her number one again. Where am I on this list. At some point you have to say, pshhht! I'm looking out for Number One. And that's kind of the thing I'm in right now. The change that I'm going through right now is, wait a minute, I'm Number One here. Okay. If I'm not healthy, then how can I keep you healthy? And before it wasn't like that. Yeah, I'm sick, I don't feel good. Come on over. But now it's, no, I don't want to be bothered. This is my time. This is my private time. I'm gonna use it. If I want to throw a party, fine. I'm being selfish. And that's the kind of change I see taking place in me. And I, actually I thought that I wouldn't like it. I think that's why I hadn't done it before. Because I thought that being selfish was just not really gonna be me. I thought it was gonna take away from me. But I have found that it doesn't take away from me. But it makes the people that has hurt you in the past respect you a little more. And I really noticed that when I say to a sister or a brother, no, you know. No, you can't do that. No, I'm not gonna allow you to do that to me. It's like, so they get angry. But then they come back and say, wow. It's a whole different approach when they come to me now.

....And that's what I want people to respect, me and mine. And as long as I was appearing to be or allowing myself to be typed as a pushover, real vulnerable, that's what people was doing to me. I am becoming more realistic about things that, hey, wait a minute. This won't jive here..... and that's how I do things and I think that's where I'm headed for for the future.

Nora's change is supported by the fact that she feels good about herself when she does set limits. She also realized that that other people's opinions should not necessarily determine her decision to say "no."

I just have to know it'll work. That I can use it with my kids frequently. When it comes to other people, when it comes to somebody crying out for help, I haven't been able to say that. But, I hadn't, I can't say haven't. I hadn't been able to say that but now I have said to myself, I have programed myself to say, wait a minute, no. And that's what really, when I found out I could say no to you and it didn't take away anything. I was not hurt by it. And I still felt good after I said no to you. Then that's what really prompted me to say, wait a minute, it's okay for me to be selfish sometimes. And I think that's how it's gonna come about. I'm just gonna have to be, I still give in sometimes, but, I mean I'll still give in then but it won't be as frequently, it won't be so much, people won't be able to say oh she's a pushover, go up there, she'll do it, you know.People are noticing that I'm not so quick to do that now. And that doesn't bother me.

And I don't feel bad about it. And that's the thing that really made me know. That I could, I don't feel bad. You know, before it was like, man how come I didn't say it? Why didn't I just do that? And I'd get halfway away from the girl's house or the guy's house and I'd turn back around and say, okay, okay, okay, I'll take you, or I'll do this for you. But now I can drive away and say, no I'm not gonna do that. And I can come home and throw my feet up and put on a basketball game and never have second thoughts about it. But it's, I think I made it harder

than it is. But I programmed myself to make it harder than what the transformation really is. It's not that hard. It's not wrong. And I think that's what it was all about, you know, wait a minute, is that wrong for me to say no? Yeah, it is because people don't want me to say no. They say no to you, right.

Other factors contributing to this change were remarrying after the death of her first husband and having another baby after eight and a half years. Along with these changes she realized the importance of her own growth and change. Just helping others was not longer satisfying.

I felt like I was helping people [being a physical therapist]. I felt like I was being assistance, I was aiding people, but I didn't feel like I was growing.

I gotta grow here. But now I can feel that I matured in life. That I have accomplished a lot of things. But there's still more that I can do. And as long as I allow myself to grow or feel like I'm growing, I can do things. And like I said I think that's why I just let people call me anytime in the night, do whatever they want to do, you know, disrespect me and my house when they came in it, was because I didn't feel the need to grow or I didn't feel as though I was growing. I was blinding myself. I was saying, wait a minute, that's what they need to do in order to make them feel good. And I wasn't saying but Nora has to do something to feel good. But now, if I don't feel good about that, see you later. And it makes a difference. It makes a big difference in life. It really does.

Both Nora's and Barbara's changing sense of self was fueled by a desire to grow and increasing self-esteem. Their stories tell of their current growth and challenges in discovering and claiming their own sense of identity and acknowledging their own needs.

Unlike Barbara who is concerned with being "overly independent" and becoming "mean and nasty," Nora several times expressed strong feelings about "looking out for Number One." While not necessarily comfortable with this attitude, she mentioned attending to herself without considering others (with the exception of her children). This need to protect and assert one's own sense of self is a theme of the next group of women.

Self-Oriented Carers. Judy, Jean, Joan and Adele seemed to reflect another viewpoint. This group of women was the most difficult to identify as a group and most different from each other. Similar to a Level Three perspective in Gilligan's framework, these women clearly included themselves in the web of care. They were concerned with caring and being responsive to others without sacrificing themselves. They felt entitled to their own needs and to give to themselves, and were not satisfied with one-way giving.

However, there did not seem to be a true sense of interdependence and mutuality which characterizes Gilligan's third mode. Though the components are there, the sense of integration and confidence seems to be missing. They appeared self-protective and defensive of their own identity and needs. There seemed to be a vigilance about maintaining their sense of identity. Their sense of self and direction in life seemed to be in process; they were grappling with trying to establish a clearer sense of themselves and their abilities. There were efforts to integrate all aspects of themselves and to gain more confidence in who they were. They provided contrasting and sometimes contradictory responses.

These women referred to a general sense of interconnection but their responses rarely mention allowing others to give to them and a mutual sense of gaining and learning from a relationship. They could be the helper, but rarely the helpee. While they could be both self-assertive and responsive to others, it seemed difficult to do these at the same time. There seems to be less interest in others' perspectives or needs when also asserting their own. This seems to be due to the need to protect their own sense of identity and to maintain and develop their own sense of self.

Joan. Joan is 41 and is a conference coordinator. Attempts at resolving the tension between different aspects of herself is a theme woven throughout Joan's story. She is struggling with her responsibility to others (especially her family) and her desire not to be responsible and to pursue her own desires. In addition, Joan is trying to integrate the strong independent side of herself with the side of herself which is sensitive, easily hurt and avoids conflict. Of the women in this group, she seems most vulnerable to the challenges of the transition out of the Second Level, i.e., addressing conflict and not diminishing self in relationships.

Joan primarily describes herself by and takes pride in her abilities in relationships. She answered the question of "describe yourself" by saying:

That question, I guess, is always asked and I don't, you know, I like myself, as a person. There are some sides of me I like very much and there are other sides about me that I know I need to seriously work on. There's a side of me that's a very giving person, but there's a side of me that

people don't really take serious that I'm actually an adult. I'm very sensitive and very caring. I won't let anybody hurt if I can help it. So there's a side of me that knows, I'm very nurturing, caring. But there's a side of me that gives my family the sense that I'm not a responsible adult.I think I'm very adult but I think that at times I show a side of me that's a little kid.

She later added,

...the weak side of me is the impatience and my relationship with men. Other than that I see myself as a very strong person. I see myself as a person who's there when people need them. I'm a very good friend. I'm an excellent friend. I mean I can listen. I can give. I tell 'em I don't have a lot of money but anything else, if you need anything else from me, I'll give it to you. If it's clothing, food, whatever. Kids are in and out of my house all the time. Other people's kids are in and out of my house all the time. I give myself a lot. ...and I'm very easy to get along with. I tend to be moody.

Joan talked about her struggle between the responsible adult part of herself and the irresponsible kid part of herself.

And now, that, you know, I'm reaching 40, it's like I'm reverting a lot more to that kid side. You know I'm fighting old age, and I'm finding that there's parts of me that just want to let go and just be a kid for a little while. Knowing that I guess there has to be a responsible side but there's a side of me that wants not to be responsible. That just wants to let it all go.

After raising her own daughter, she recently took custody of her seven year old niece which has exacerbated her feelings..

'I have some resentment that the years that I thought would be my years are no longer my years.'

I've been thinking a lot about the self because the self is suffering more. I gave up more. So I think more about the things that I would have loved to have done or would like to do that I no longer can do right now that I have to put on hold again.

I just like the independence part of myself. The part that has not to be responsible for anybody. Just get up and go.

Though Joan has ambivalent feelings and is unclear about what she wants to do, "I have no idea what I want to be.I still don't know what I really want to do," she is clear about her responsibility to her family.

But I have the direction in terms of my family and my commitment to my family and I won't renege on that and I don't haphazardly do things that would affect them, you know.

In the previous passages she used the word "independence" to mean lack of responsibility to others. In the following excerpt she uses it to mean self-sufficiency. In her self-description she highlighted her giving and being there for people, but now states that she does not like to accept this from others.

I'm pretty much independent so I don't like to depend upon people too much. For me, I think that if I ask somebody to do me a favor, it feels like I owe them something in return.I don't feel comfortable with asking people to help me out a whole lot.

Even though at times she referred to her independence as a positive characteristic, she also named it as a flaw. This is in the context of the problems it causes in her relationships with men. Joan expressed her desire to have an equal partnership.

So I know that I'm a good person, basically, and I have a major problem, I have a major problem in terms of I have a very strong independence and that it creates problems in my relationship with men. I have a very hard time with men because I don't want my way per se, but I want to give, I want it 50/50 and I know you can't have it 50/50, at all. But that's my desire. That I could find somebody that I could have a relationship with. This person understands, I work and I'm a provider as well as he's a provider so I feel like that individual should not expect me to come home, cook, clean and do all those things that women, that they think women are supposed to do. That's a real problem for me because I rebel on that. I fight like hell on that. It's like, I don't expect you to do all these things but I want you there as a support and I want you to be able to do some of those things but I know that I'm not gonna get all those things from you. But at least meet me part of the way. And I find in my relationship with men they don't meet me part of the way. They either meet me a little or not at all.

Though she is adamant in what she wants and expects, Joan still finds it difficult to maintain this stand in her actual relationships.

So I find that there's a side of me that's very weak with men, who will give in to a lot of them at times and then there's a side of me that won't, you know. And there are some that, some behavior I'll put up with that other people will not put up with. And, I tend to allow men to do, to act out their little behavior more so than I do the females.

Joan discussed her tendency to be moody and to withdraw. On the one hand, she withdraws if she's been hurt, yet she also is willing to end relationships when she feels that she has reached her limit.

I'm moody in a relationship if it doesn't work out I tend to also shut myself off and don't discuss things. I get very sensitive and I just withdraw. And I even do that with friends, too. If I feel like somebody has hurt me, in some aspect or another, I withdraw. I terminate the friendship, too. If it's really something very painful, I will terminate a friendship because of that. Because I feel like I've given all I can give of myself and if I feel like somebody is taking more than they've given back to me, then I tend to just terminate the friendship. I have no problems terminating. It's painful but I have no problem terminating it. But, I try not to do that. I try to give people many opportunities to correct that. But there are points where I'll finally say, enough is enough. And that's even with men. I'll finally say enough is enough.

Conflict is an area which is a challenge for Joan. The fear of being hurt or hurting others she is close to impedes her self-expression and causes her to withdraw. She wishes that she could be more direct.

I would like to be able to be free about saying, I can be very free with people that I'm not that close with but I think my biggest problem with people that I'm close to I withdraw a lot. Because I don't want to hurt them or I don't want to be hurt. So I tend to withdraw and say, okay I had a fight with my sister, things didn't go well. I withdraw instead of confronting and dealing with them, I withdraw. But there are times when I can confront them and deal with an issue but there are other times that I don't and I don't like myself when I do that. I don't like myself when I just cannot say, hey, boom, this is it, I don't like what you did, I don't like, but I always look at it in terms I'm hurting that person. So, I don't like fighting either. I really don't like to fight. I would rather walk away from something than to fight with someone,

at all. And, that's with men, with children, with my family. Now, I will get into, I will get into a verbal fight with somebody I feel like is totally wrong--or has said something that really makes no sense.

Ultimately, she reasserts her commitment to preserve her sense of self.

I've resolved that with myself to know that I'm a very strong person in terms of the self and the identity and that I don't want anyone to take that from me. And I refuse to let anybody take that from me. So that for me has been difficult but has been easy, too.

In addition to getting "fatter and heavier," a change Joan has seen in herself is not needing to have the consent or approval of her family. Unlike Level Two, she is able to make and accept her own decisions based on her own opinions.

I think a lotta times in the past I needed consent. I needed affirmation that I was a person who had to have this affirmation from them. Now I feel like, I don't need that. I can do these things on my own and still be a whole person. And that has helped me move in the direction. I've made decisions. I've done things. I've even not shared things with them because it was something of the self. It was something for myself.

I don't let anybody tell me that I'm not anyone because I'm a Black woman. I feel good about myself and who I am, in total.

Judy. Judy is also 41. She is currently working as a custodian to put herself through college. She has had numerous different jobs in the past.

Judy also described herself primarily in terms of her relational abilities. Though she spoke at length about herself, she still expressed some uncertainty. After portions of elaborate self

description she would say that she wasn't sure how to describe herself because she wasn't sure how other people saw her. She would then further eloquently articulate how she saw herself.

I would describe myself as being a sensitive person, sensitive to other people and their needs. I would describe myself as being an individual who [long pause] was put here to help somebody. I believe that that's what my purpose is here on earth, to help somebody. I wasn't put here to hurt anyone, to help.

...I don't know, I usually have left a description of myself up to other people for some reason because I don't know other people see me except for when they say, express their opinions. But my opinion of myself, I would like to think and I feel that I'm on the road to becoming a truly virtuous person. I'm one of the most fair people that I know. I'm very fair. Very fair. And truthful, as truthful as I can be. Sometimes to the point it used to get me in trouble.

....I'm very observant [laughs]. And I constantly, I watch everything about people that is. I watch their actions, their mannerisms. I watch everything, because I'm generally interested in people. What makes them tick, what makes them do these things?

....I'm very judgmental. I'm able to look at a person that I don't even know and I can tell you and be pretty much on the dot what that person is all about, what they think about themselves, how they see themselves, just by their mannerisms, everything. I'm very judgmental. But not, I don't think, in a negative way. I'm judgmental only so that I can determine what type of person this is that I'm getting ready to deal with and respond to that.

.... I'm not a patronizing person at all. I don't patronize nobody, and I don't think nobody should patronize me.

....So I guess that's another thing I think about myself. I'm proud of myself. I'm proud of what I've been able to do with myself.

....I guess I describe myself as a fun loving, fun loving in that, fun to me is laughing. I love to laugh. Not be silly, but to find things that gladden your heart, that make your heart ... I like that feeling, you know, when you find something that makes you laugh. You just feel so good inside and something in there just busts open like a flower, real quickly. And that's good. And when you share those with other people, it's just so precious.

Again, after eloquent and insightful self-description, Arlene expressed difficulty in describing herself and said that she found it easier to talk about what she thought as opposed to who she was.

I don't know. I just have a hard time describing myself. I might agree with other people's descriptions of me. I would like people to describe me for themselves, based on how I impress them. I don't know how I impress other people, but I do know how I impress myself. I think I'm a pretty good person, and I wish more people were more like me. There certainly wouldn't be all the things that go on in this world, because I couldn't hurt anybody intentionally. And I wouldn't even think about it.

.... I think when I describe myself to other people I can tell them more about what I think than I can about myself, whatever that means.

Several times Arlene referred to the fact that she is very protective of herself.

I am open and honest, but when it comes to expressing my innermost feelings, I usually keep those to myself. I guess I feel vulnerable. I feel naked, stripped. And if you know the innermost part of me, then you have that [unin.], that as a result of that I could be hurt. You could hurt me. So that's my effort at keeping people at arm's length. That's my effort of, that's my space, that's

mine. The only thing that is truly mine. That's why. That's mine.

I don't know. It's hard for me to describe myself. I never describe myself to myself, or if I do, that gets locked away inside. It goes up there and it's locked. The door is locked right away, and I don't retrieve that. I don't think about it. And it might be there right now, but I don't know how to open up the door and bring it out and let you have it.

....Contrary to a lot of people's belief, I think very highly of myself. I'm positive. I don't like negativity. I avoid it because it generates the kind of emotions that I don't like to feel. So much goes on in this world that I shun all of those things that make me feel unhappy as I can. There are times and things that you can't do anything about, so I need my energy to deal with the things that I spoke about early that make me sad, that make me hateful. I need my energy to be able to deal with that.

Though Arlene talked extensively about her caring nature and her desire to help and not hurt other people, her experiences with racism have fueled hateful feelings which she tries to contain.

I'll even disregard being a female. Just things that have happened to me as a result of the color of my skin has made me very vicious inside, very vicious. And it's hard to look at people and just regard them as individuals instead of looking at the color of their skin which generates and regenerates constantly all these old you know, hatreds and ill feelings. Some of the negative things that have happened to me has rekindled a lot of animosities towards different people or groups of people, but then again, when I meet people I just, I go out of my way inside of myself to regard them as individuals, and that's the only way I've been able to cope in this society. Some things that have happened to me so badly that if I wasn't able to control them, I wouldn't be able to function in this society as a sane, reasonable person.

Arlene seemed to have no qualms about of where to set limits in her helping. Her contradictory statements about people's requests for help may reflect her own struggle between her caring nature and her hateful feelings.

Again, I'm here to help somebody in whatever way, and I will do that. I'll take time with people that I really shouldn't take, only because there's things that I need to do for myself. But I'm an unselfish person, and I always feel like if somebody is trying to take up my time, well then they must need that. But then again I know when to draw the line. I know when they get to be burdensome, and I give them as much as I think they need to help them. I don't let folks lean on me, not knowingly. I try to be aware of it when they are, and try to set them straight, that every individual has to be on their own. You have to be responsible for yourself and responsible to yourself first, before you can help anybody else.

....I'm a sharing person.I share myself, I share what I have, but then again I am selfish, because I don't want people, because people will take and take and they'll take all they can get because they're users, for the most part. I won't let myself be used. If there's something that you need, I'll give it to you if I can, and if I can't, then I'm not responsible for it.

Arlene had talked about her earlier feelings of self-hatred and that "people used to make me feel like I wasn't nothing." In response to how she saw herself change Arlene stated,

What's different, ...is that I don't feel bad about myself and about the color of my skin. Matter of fact, I don't know what word or phrase to put with it, but I'm kind of like, I am what I am. And there's nothing I can do about it, anyway. So you got to feel good about yourself. So I do. I think I'm a great

person, ok? And skin and all of that, that has nothing to do with it. It's what's inside that counts. And I think my insides are very good.

...So instead of hating myself because of how I am, I'm protective of it. I'm protective of it, and I won't let anybody treat me any kind of way because of that. That's what the 60's did.

I think that was the beginning of all the laughter that I prize so much, because back then is when I first experienced my heart busting open, being happy, like things was just broken off of me and I just BUSTED out. That's how I felt. And oh, I was so proud I could just think about it now and just cry all over again. It was like such a beautiful, what do you call it, a revelation or something? (Big sigh).

Adele. Adele is 57. While she has had a very unusual and exciting past (which is is fond of telling about), she presently is a case worker at a community agency.

Adele was the most difficult women to place in a group. It was hard to reconcile my impression of her in the interview with the hard, black and white words of the interview transcript. While she expressed many things that on paper sound like a well developed interdependent perspective there were aspects of her responses that led me to believe that she was really in a much more transitional state.

Adele defined herself primarily in relational terms. She also noted the connection between her positive sense of self and her ability to help others.

Fun to be with,devious at times. Um, very subtle, diplomatic, very loyal person, very good trusting friend. All pluses to say about myself. I'll go out of my way to help just about anybody. I guess one of the nicest people you could really. I

never liked myself until I got into the Weight Watcher program. And I found there was a lot of good, I never loved myself. And I do now because I find the more I love myself, the more I can do for everybody. Because I don't have any hang-ups. I really don't have any hang-ups, now. And it's a wonderful, free feeling. It really is. I can help somebody else. No hang-ups at all.

A big change for Adele was her self-esteem and new found competencies and reliability.

Well, I like myself now. I never liked myself, even when I was young and very beautiful and attractive, I never liked myself, because I didn't know what was missing in my life. You know, the zeal and so forth and so on. I was just a pretty little thing that couldn't do very much but sing a little song...

.....I was always a strong person, always very loyal. All those little attributes I always had. But now, I can be depended on. Now, I was always dependable. Always, always on time. Always dependable.

....I see myself as being a very flexible person. I can flow with the wind. ...I see myself as somebody who can represent this agency beautifully. Whereas before, I couldn't do it. I see myself now as a research person. If I don't know anything about something, I'll go and look it up. I see myself as not being lazy. And I used to be very lazy -- lazy physically and lazy mentally. Just couldn't be bothered. That's a Taurus trait anyhow. I've overcome it. Um. I see myself as a very lovable person--someone I'd like to know and be with and have fun with--laugh with. That's it in a whole nutshell.

She added the importance of getting affirmation and recognition for her work.

And as I said, I need those strokes. In order to get those kind of strokes that I need, I have to be a good representative of what I'm selling.

One of the biggest factors in her change in self-identity was a mentor at work who also introduced her to God. Adele now feels the need to develop and use the talents she feel she has wasted in her life.

She taught me how to be honest with myself.
....And I talk to God a lot.And I hadn't realized that it was the hand of God that had been guiding me all this time.

....I think I'm trying to make up for lost time. There were a couple years of my life, few years of my life when I just wasted time completely. And really, and I pacify myself, I say but you're doing so well now. You're doing fine. Not making a lot of money but at least you're at peace with yourself. And, I often think about that phrase in the Bible about God gave us so many talents. And on judgement day, he's gonna ask you, how many talents did you use? Well, I'm trying to use up all the ones he gave me that's why I'm making up for this lost time.

Adele was very absorbed in her helping role at work and developing her own talents and abilities. There is little mention of friendships and other peer relationships.

I have some good neighbors but as far as the social contact, I don't have too much. Because I can enjoy my own company. I get along very well with my thoughts. There's no arguments. Sometimes there are--little discussions I have with myself. And, I'm a typical old maid, I guess. I live with my kitty cat, Cousin April. And, that's about it.

Jean. Jean is 29 years old and is currently enrolled at a prestigious college. Though Jean talked a lot about her work for social change, especially racism, she described herself by her general abilities and attributes, not relational qualities.

Depends on the day. Depends on the hour.
 Impatient. I want it now. Hardworking and yet, sometimes sporadic. I try to self accounting in I've got to get done what I do, I try to look back on what I've done during the day or whatever.

Hypoglycemic, so I'm periodically evil, when my blood sugar's low. Often lonely because I don't have a partner. I plan. I plan fairly long term and short term. I don't know, I can't think of anything else....I feel like, I often feel like a foreigner in New England, among white people, because New Englanders just don't speak my native tongue at all.

In terms of how she has seen herself change she cited "finding her voice" and feeling more purpose in her life.

I saw myself as being a hardworker and wanting to do more but I couldn't see how I was going to do any more. I could not see.

I'd have to say that I found my voice. I could always write, always. I could say everything that I ever wanted to say in the most creative way you could think of but I couldn't talk worth a damn. And, I don't know. I've learned how to speak up.

....I guess I'm not as threatened as I used to be by people who appear to be very entertaining; appear to be super up-to-date on things because of all the things I can see right for me right now....but there was I time I couldn't, I just couldn't and I have found that I can make changes. I can make some changes. It's not easy but, I make 'em.

I feel like I have much more purpose, and that's finally been defined, and not that it won't change, but it's clear. I don't think that the outer framework will change. By that I mean that the

most important thing for me in my life is to serve God however I can do it.

The significant changes Jean has noticed in herself have had to do with issues of race.

I wouldn't have described myself as being a foreigner. I wouldn't have even thought twice about being Black because Atlanta's Black, and that helps me to understand how white people can be in a white place and there it is. You know, having people of color there. I guess that's all. Being in a White environment is totally giving me a new perspective where I'm invisible. Where people... I know I shouldn't say, I really shouldn't say that. When I came here I felt very invisible and yet visible, too visible.

Coming to this. That's the main thing. Coming to this, different things, has caused a lot of upheaval in my life, just with the racism that I've dealt with here.

....That has changed me and catalyzed me into becoming actively involved in community activities to try to effect changes, to change other people or at least to begin some kind of dialogue for a change. So coming here has really changed me--really, really changed me.

Like Joan, Jean noted that she is unwilling to play a subordinate role in a relationship with a man. This is a change for her and compared to some of her friends, she now sounds somewhat radical.

.... a lot of my friends, and I can feel that just by the conversation, I sound fanatical or slightly radical or something, you know, and that's been the general, that's been the change in me that I can see within the last year. You know, that I can't go back into a relationship with a man the way I used to be able go into a relationship with a man, you know, that I'm going to cook, and I'm going to clean, and

I'm going to take care of children, kiss my ass. I mean, those days are gone and most women who are friends of mine aren't into that as well as having careers, doing all the traditional roles too, plus some. I can never say, I couldn't even pretend that I would be just, if my husband got a promotion and had, that I would just pick up and move. You know those kinds of things.

When Jean elaborated on what she meant by being responsible and doing the right thing, she talked about being trying to be assertive as well as tolerant and sensitive.

Learning how to talk to people in a kind way and not just lambasting them, beating them half to death with my words even if I'm right. Just accept the fact they're learning too, and I am too. Not going off the deep end.

Overall, this diverse group of women expressed their concern and commitment to helping others, which was part of their sense of identity. They are firm in their resolve not to sacrifice themselves for others and tend to be self-protective. Clarifying and developing their voices, abilities and directions is a central focus.

Mutualists. Carol, Alice, Toni and Teresa reflected another perspective. This perspective corresponds with Gilligan's Third Level. Women are now able to claim their own power and worth. They recognize the need to include their own, as well as others needs within their domain of care and responsibility. They also appear to accept and integrate both these aspects. They seemed fairly secure, relaxed and confident in their competence, identity and ability to handle things. They referred to characteristics of themselves in the past that are reminiscent of the issues raised

by the women Self-Discoverers and Self-Oriented Carers. These include always giving to others but not to themselves, not feeling self-confident, being self-protective, needing to prove themselves and not allowing themselves to receive support. Nor where these qualities completely absent from their current self-descriptions. Eventhough they seemed fairly clear and comfortable with their sense of identity, this does not mean that they also did not have self-doubts, personal vulnerabilities and interest in their own growth.

The women in this group are the most highly educated and professional. They all either have or are completing graduate degrees. They are also all involved in some type of human services work.

Carol. Carol is 59 and is director of a social service agency. When asked to describe herself, Carol mentioned that she was "intense," "aggressive" and "thoughtful" but almost immediately began to describe how she had changed over the past six years since she found God.

Like some of the other women, Carol reflected on her tranisition from always giving to others to expecting the giving to be returned, as well as giving to herself. She talked about her new sense of identity and the realization of the importance of time and space for herself.

Well, the past few years it's the fact that I really found myself. That there was some sort of peace as I look back over the accomplishments, that there is some sort of peace with family. Popularity really didn't matter. That people had to accept me for who I was, for myself.

.... it was so easy to say, yeah, I was a giving person. But you know in order to give, you gotta get something back. And up until six years ago when I really found God and began to take that little selfish square off of myself .

....It came through God. Just came through in quiet meditation... You had to have time... You had to have time with onesself. time to sit back and say, who are you? Where have you been? Where the heck are you going? So that, you know, whether we wanted to talk about formal terms of goals and objectives, whatever, seriously, that's what it was.

I would always, you know, if I had \$20 and someone wanted it, I'd give it up. No second thoughts. Or if someone needed a vacation, I would take my vacation and give it to them because they needed it more than I did. And it was always everybody needed it more than myself. And what was lacking within myself is that while I was doing all this giving I needed it too. I needed someone to stroke me. And I needed someone, every human needs that and I, um, I thought about it at first, that it wasn't selfish.

Although Carol mentioned that she needed to be given to and needed strokes, she almost exclusively talked about recognizing the need to give to herself as well as others. The true sense of mutuality that was missing from women in Group III seemed tenuous in Carol's responses.

Also, as heard in other stories, Carol had to deal with feeling selfish. She ultimately realized that having time for herself also helped her to help others.

It wasn't selfish to niche off....that quiet time. That it wouldn't be selfish to say, "mmm, I'm gonna buy that blouse," "mmm, I'm gonna go do this." And there was a time when I wouldn't do it. I'd say, well you have it. Take it all. You can have it all. With my kids or anyone, you take it all, you have it

all, I'm, it doesn't matter. I'll come last, you know. It's almost like that old adage, I think I saw my mother do that. The kids eat first and then I'll take what's left, you know. That kind of thing. And I always thought that you were selfish if you didn't do that. This is something that emulated from my mother right down the line, and it's not selfish at all. It's not selfish because it makes you stronger.

It also makes you a better person and your perspective is a little different when you begin to deal with problems. And it took me awhile to realize that every one needs that. That everybody needs that breathing space. That everyone needs some time to collect thoughts whether they do it daily, whether they do it weekly, they need something for themselves. And if you're not healthy and you're not able to give them, then how are you able to give advice. And it took me a long time. I was always give, give, give, give.

Recently surviving colon cancer, from which her brother and sister died, reinforced Carol's trust in God and the need to care for herself. Carol also recounted an earlier turning point, in 1971, in the development of her sense of self.

I had my first experience, my husband had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, and that was my first experience that I could really hold the house together. Cause I really didn't think I could. And I had the experience of being able to hold the family together. I even had money in the bank!I really proved that I just wasn't that helpless.

....I went to work as a group worker. And suddenly my perspective began to change. Because I had to be the one that provides as opposed to always taking the problem or the issue and tearing it apart. I mean I actually had to worry about providing and prevention. And I did it and did it well....and that lead me to a little sense of independence, also.

That opportunity allowed Carol to reflect on the limitations of her life previously and how little she had developed her own sense of self.

It also dawned on me what kind of person I was. I was a person who really didn't have any character, whatever. I was almost living in the shadow of my husband and I really just didn't think I could do anything.

....When the time came, I came through like gold. But it was another woman that helped me and she was my mother, and I realized also that there was some skill and some..... and I should begin to develop it better. Because I was, it was always, him going to school, what he wanted. He was always playing the saxophone and I was always....the dumb-dumb, sitting by, no personality, no skills, whatever. But I found that it wasn't that way at all. I really had skills. And I really had some talent.

And I really could do a lot of things, but just never tried. I had stopped at high school education and now was the time to say, can you latch onto a new career? You can do this. You've gotta bring your family through, and whatever. So that gave me motivation for going to school. That gave me motivation for saying there isn't anything that couldn't be done. That gave me motivation for changing my lifestyle...

.... I mean it was like being in prison and just getting out. It was freedom.

After recognizing her self-worth and skills, Carol reported becoming very self-focused and aggressive.

I went from, yeah, I'm really good, can take care of this family.maybe you really don't need your husband.

So I went to a real hard-nose of being able to talk to people in terms of saying, well, you know, with the Department of Human

Services, we deserve it. I mean that's the kind of hard-nose, hard ball kind of stuff. Spirituality ("meeting Christ") and self-confidence helped her grow into a perspective which included more consideration of others and less need to highlight herself; she became a "team player." Carol saw this a positive step.

I wasn't so pushy and that kind of thing. And with that came a different kind of aggressiveness. An aggressiveness that one almost knew the outcome but, you know, it was with respect for the other person across the table. It was respect for the individuals that you're talking to. And that's a hard thing for a lot of people.....I've been hurt so muchThat was the transition, hard-nosed Hannah, until finally....

....I don't highlight who I am so much as much if it's your thoughts can be used, or your ideas or assistance can be used, I think that's important. There was a timeoh, make sure my name is spelled right. It doesn't matter I think it's cause

..... I think it's cause I know that I can come out of the mothballs and get elected to any city post. I think it's, you know I did that, after being on the school committee. And I think that no matter where it is, your work is recognized and it doesn't matter but you help somebody out.

How to be effective team player. You don't have to be a leader all the time. You can be someone who supports someone else. You can be someone who formulates the ideas and somebody else takes hold of the project. So there are many roles one plays other than just saying, I am, or whatever....and I learned that. And that's a good lesson to learn, to be a team player.

Alice. Alice is 31 and works as a psychologist in an agency.

When asked to describe herself, Alice said her family would describe her as having a "hard exterior." Since she grew up in the ghetto she

learned not to "wear her heart on her sleeve." She is not always aware that she projects that image since she has done it so long.

Inside, Alice said, she is "real malleable, really easily hurt," "cries at the drop of a hat" and is "real caring and real giving." She needs to be careful since people can manipulate that. Other terms she used were, "intelligent, physically attractive and aggressive" (if it's something she's passionate about). She added, "No one's gonna give it to me, I have to go get it."

In discussing the ways she's changed, Alice echoed many of the self-conceptions typical of Level Two. She had always given to others and neglected herself.

I've always been giving, giving, giving, giving kind of person, cause that's what I've learned growing up. We shared, 'cause with nine of us there was no way you could be selfish.'

We'll give you the shirt off our back and try to find something else to give you if you really need it but for the first time in my life I felt I was giving to myself. And even with my family I was able to say 'No, I can't do that.' So I was putting me as a priority.

I had been sucked into the role of taking care of everyone and then allowing that to happen.

In reference to her mother's ability for stimulating guilt, Alice stated:

I recognized that the only way I could feel guilty was if I allowed myself to feel guilty. And recognizing that no matter what happened, things seemed to work themselves out, they didn't fall apart if I wasn't there working them out.

That's the process I've been going through the past few years. It's going to be OK. It will be OK. And I feel fine and everyone else would manage to feel fine.

Alice further discussed the lack of clarity of responsibility and control of her own and others' feelings. She said that in past she would personalize everything--internalize people's reactions ("do head trips") and take things personally. "I put my happiness, the responsibility for that on other people. I would want someone else to do things for me."

As she developed more self-confidence, through consciousness raising and the evolution of a spiritual perspective, Alice was able to see "others stuff not necessarily as my own" and to "separate their garbage from my garbage."

In the past Alice also had a low self-image. She didn't think she was physically attractive, intelligent or capable. She was very modest, reserved and afraid to talk. Alice was more judgemental--"I did it, so can you."

Before college, Alice said,

I didn't give a shit about anybody, didn't want to give a shit, since it was too painful to care about stuff. Too painful to really care.

While going to a predominantly Black college, she was able to let her guard down and not have to fight. Later in life that she developed the ability to be assertive, "how to take other people's feelings into account."

Over the past several years she's also learned how to be diplomatic. "I want to bring out love in other people as well as do that myself." She referred to her mother who could "get the point across and people still feel good about her." Alice also added that she no longer felt the need to prove herself.

Toni. Toni is 39, in graduate school and works as a human resources consultant. She was able to describe herself in some detail.

I would describe myself as a sensitive person in tune what other people are feeling and doing. I think that I am tenacious, and that I want to go and look at every opportunity that there is, and turn over every rock. If I have something in front of me and there are barriers, I want to feel that I stick with the task until it is done. And the same thing with people. To stay with... if I'm helping someone, I want to stick with it until I feel that I have done the very best that I can, all that I can do before I let go of it. I see myself as creative. I can take situations where it seems like there is no way out and try to find a way to solve it. And in doing that, I have to get myself in a place where I can think creatively.

And that entails being able to reach down inside of me and pull out the things that are positive, because when all things around me are falling apart, how do I withstand?

I have a real short fuse. I've worked on that a lot but I still need to work on it.

...I'm one of those people who don't need other people to entertain me or satisfy me. That can be an advantage. It can also be a disadvantage.

I see myself as needing support and recognizing that. There are many years when I didn't recognize that I needed support. I felt like I always had to be the strong one. Now it's ok not to be strong.

I see myself as having evolved into a spiritual person.

Not only did Toni realize that she did not always need to be strong and could accept support from others, she also referred to her ability to view herself critically and learn from her mistakes without undermining her sense of competence.

I see myself as having evolved over the years into a person who can look at mistakes, trace them and see what happened to them, so that I know how not to do it again. Face it, and then move away from it.

I see myself also as an active person who intends to be young forever. I see myself as a professional. I strive to be professional at all times. Perfection is one of my givens. I see myself as not holding myself in a straight jacket when I'm not a perfectionist. But I see myself as always trying to reach that perfect goal, and that is the same as saying "Reach for the moon and you might get a star." And I can be satisfied with getting a star on that particular task if I did reach for the moon. And then I go and reach for the moon on something else.

Toni recognized the need and her ability to see things from someone else's perspective. Her experience in a group dynamics class allowed her to realize that in order to really understand someone else she also needed to give of herself. A mutuality was required.

I wanted to really feel what other people were feeling. I did sit back, and I found that I needed to interact too in order to do that. I could sit back and feel other people, where they were. Put myself in their shoes. But I also need to give apart of me too to do that.

In her work, Toni talked about how she gives of herself because it's meaningful to her and wants to change the world, not because she expects something back.

And when I go out to give people my workshops, I don't think that they think I'm here for two days and then I'm done. That's not me. And I do, I give away a lot. But it always comes back. I don't do it because I want something back or I expect something back. But I do it because I want

it. I mean it's meaningful to me, the workshops that I do, the things that I put into them. I would like to see a change in behavior. My goal is not to be out there just to make money, but my goal is to see a change in behavior. I am silly enough to think that this world can change [laughs].

Toni's response was similar to Alice's when asked how she had changed. Toni reported that if asked about herself in the past she would have focused on other people and diminished her own abilities and agency.

When I was younger I saw myself as being able to accomplish things, but I saw myself as so inadequate. I was a shy person too.

Oh yes. If you'd asked me this a few years ago I might have only talked about other people. I might have only told you what other people did for me and I couldn't have told you what I did for myself. And I would have given you qualifiers. I might have said, 'Yes, I went to ask for a job but...' and I would have given myself praise on the one hand and taken it back with the other. I couldn't have seen myself standing as an individual being qualified, having strengths without overemphasizing the weaknesses that I had. I think that would have been the difference in a few years ago in how I would have described myself.

When she was younger, Toni was instilled with the responsibility to use her talents and help other Blacks. That still motivates her today.

I am still basically shy. But when I get up in the morning, I put on my armor I guess. I would say I put on my professionalism, I put on my smile, I put on all these things that make me be the person that I am. Because I suppose if I were allowed to I would just sit around and just be me and enjoy life, and let everybody else do things. Basically I'm a laid back person, but when I was younger, those people who were around me who encouraged me to

be the very best that I could be, let me know that that was just not the way life was supposed to be. You're not going to be that kind of person. You were given talents, and so you use them. If you don't use them, you will lose them. And it's selfish of you not to share what you have been given. So I saw myself as having a tremendous task to perform, but I didn't feel adequate to do it.

Like other women, Toni's own growth and development is tied to her responsibility to her family. In reference to her family Toni stated,

That has been the most important part of my life, because in each task that I have taken on, I've had to look at how that effects my family and integrate it as part of that....

Toni has also moved increasingly towards assisting in the growth of others as well as her own.

I feel as if I have mellowed out at age 40. Things just start, some things just aren't as important as they used to be.I want to reach out and touch people, and that has been my main thrust in the last few years, is changing my idea of what my life is about, and being able to make a mark and having it be meaningful to people besides myself.

Teresa. Teresa is 31, finishing a social work degree and works in a human service agency. She described herself as:

Hard-working, calculus [sic], strong. I guess with hard-working it would be hard-working/good work ethics. Family-oriented, people-oriented. Um, happy. I'm fairly happy.

When asked to elaborate what she meant by being "strong," Teresa referred to the fact that she could handle situations that

arise. The examples she gave illustrated her ability to meet her own needs and at the same time be responsive to others.

....being able to handle a situation of, that come unexpectedly around my being busy.I don't let that interrupt what I need to do. And I also try to deal with that. A good example, there was a crisis with a friend. And I was working and I had to go to school. And I felt good about the fact that I was able to talk to this friend and help this friend out of the crisis and sort of get them some help. And it was like a last minute thing. We had about 20 minutes before I was leaving the office. When I received the call like I said, I only had 20 minutes.... When I got this call, you know, it's a friend, you can't say no.

Another example she gave of being strong was confronting discriminatory behavior.

There is a lot of, to a degree, of indirect sexual harassment and the treatment of, towards women, especially Black women.And I don't tolerate it. I'll report somebody...., males especially, or anyone, for that matter. So they pretty much leave me alone. Not out of intimidation but out of knowing that I'm just not gonna lay there and take it.

Though Tereas saw herself as carrying a lot of the traits that she's always had, she is now "older and wiser" and wanting to get married. She expressed her readiness for some stability by referring to her clearer sense of direction.

Then I was moving at a very fast pace, trying to find out what I wanted, what I really wanted. Now I kinda know what I want. And I'm not getting as confused about it.

The women in this group tended to describe themselves in terms that referred both to their relational qualities as well as

their other abilities and competencies. They were able to talk about themselves fairly easily and in some depth. They expressed self-confidence and the desire to help and care for both themselves and others. While religion and spirituality was mentioned by many of the women, (including Teresa), Carol, Alice and Toni all stated that the evolution of a spiritual perspective and themselves as a spiritual person was a significant factor in their sense of self and identity. This will be discussed further in Section Four and in the next chapter.

Other Salient Issues

Self-Reliance. As seen in Carol's story, many women stated that being on their own or taking on unplanned responsibility was important in developing their sense of self and competence. Though they focus on doing it on their own, some support often seemed to be present.

Joan: I'm still strong but I think I'm, it's a different kind of strength. It's a strength that will still go on and I won't, that I don't have to call my mother for all these things. I've established this independence where I can make decisions, or my family make those decisions.

After Joan had moved away from her family, she lived with her sister or a friend until they left the area.

In fact, right after she had left, this friend had left, I totally was like I'm gonna fall apart because this was the first time I've really ever been alone to have to provide and care for the self. You know, where am I getting the money from? How am I gonna make the ends meet? How am I gonna function day to day? Cause there's always been a

support system where babysitter, whatever. I need to go to the store, there's always been somebody there. So when she left, I felt like totally lost. That I was gonna totally break down and I wasn't going to be able to manage anything. But I found that I could manage things. And I think I did better as time goes on. I think I did much better with it. And, now I don't have to have, I mean, I have the support, but I don't have to have the support the same way. I can make decisions and I can do things that maybe in years gone by I didn't think I could ever do--at all.

[What's led to that change?]

The part of having to be on my own, for once. Just totally being on my own, without assistance being here.

[What led to those changes? How did you become more calm?]

Mary: Moving out of my mother's house [laughs]. Oh yeah. Moving out of my mother's house and living on my own. Getting to know who I am. I have three kids and I have a life to live. And I have to support them, and work to pay bills. Keep them clothed, fed. Make sure they get proper meals, a good education, live in a better neighborhood than what I used to live in. ...I guess the two years that I spent by myself with my two oldest ones, it gave me a chance to think of a lot of things about what has happened, what I could do, things like that. For instance, I went to school and got my GED. I did that when I was single, by myself. My kids were in daycare, and during the summertime, we always spent the summer together. I was able to establish a few credits and be able to establish credit in my own name. I had got my maiden name back finally, after six years and I started establishing credit here and there.

Toni talked about being away at school as a way she overcame feeling shy and inadequate.

As an unmarried person, I had to find my way. I stopped being shy because I was on my own. I went to school the first year. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't go to college in the first place. Then when I did go, with no money, I had a scholarship that took care of the first semester.

I grew up in Virginia, and I went to school in Tennessee. I went there with \$50 in my pocket, with no idea how I would get the second semester tuition paid for. I had not been granted a work study, but I knew I was going to school somehow. So that in itself was a way of getting rid of the shyness and the inadequacy, because then each success, as I was successful in each arena, then that built a little more on that I could do. I began to see myself as something different.

And that made me feel like well gee, you did this. Your parents didn't do it, because my parents and I had been talking about how we were going to get me through the second semester. You did it, and that's how I stopped being shy. I started asking for things. I went to the office and started asking how I could do different things to make money, extra money so that I could have money for myself other than just the tuition. And that was what happened to me. Each time that I had a success it built on [unin.] And the support that I had.

Jean accounted for some of her change by saying:

....Having pulled up from Nashville and come up here, not having any relatives or anything, with two children. I had to stick it out for a year. It makes me feel like I can do that. I can do that. I can stand on my own as long as I plan it, if it was well planned, and not just go off on a wing and a prayer.

Future Changes

Most women had difficulty talking about how they saw themselves changing in the future. Some women responded by saying

that they could not really think about the future and could only focus on the present. Other women spoke only about external circumstances that might change. In comparison to the more personal attributes and psychological characteristics they had used to describe themselves in the past and present, their future descriptions were much more activity and situation based .

For example, Alice, who described herself and her past changes with a lot of psychological insight, responded to the question about her future changes by saying that she would be watching the development of her baby and talked about her possible career moves and political activity. When asked specifically about she, herself, changing she replied: "I can't project forward. I can look back and see the changes, but I can't project or envision that far ahead. I'm satisfied right now."

A similar view was expressed by Joan and Teresa:

Joan: I have no idea. You know, I don't even like to look at the future cause I don't know if there is a future. And, so I try to live day to day.....

[So there're not ways that you see you, yourself, changing?]

No. No. I think I've reached by peak-- in terms of changing. I don't even, I can't see myself changing in five or ten years. But I like myself the way I am right now.....So if I change any, maybe it's a change with working for another goal in life in terms of giving something back from what I've gotten.

Teresa: I'd like to be married, have children.

[Any ways that you, yourself, some qualities and ways you are, might change?]

I don't know. I really can't say. Cause, again, my philosophy is that day to day thing. And to think about the future, not knowing what tomorrow holds for me, I just, I don't know.

Adele focused on concrete changes: talking to more people, having a nice apartment, maybe "meeting a guy," getting her degree and running for alderman. Toni's initial response sounded like Adele's:

I see myself becoming rich and famous. I don't say that to very many people. In the back of my mind, that's where I see myself. I plan to write a book. So I plan to see myself as rich and famous. I plan to have a tremendous impact on this world. I plan to change one of those ills of America. So that means I will get involved on a global basis. That's a tall order, but I expect to do it.

....One of the other things that I want to do is to form a companyI plan to build some kind of learning institution for adults, corporations, whomever and run that.

When further asked, "Are there any ways that you see you, yourself, changing in the future?," Toni referred to an internal quality:

Yes, I do. I plan to be a more patient person. I have a tendency to leap quickly. I have a real short fuse. I've worked on that a lot but I still need to work on it.

In general, many women expressed positive feelings about themselves, "I like myself the way I am right now," and "I love me." They also said they felt good about themselves "most of the time" or "95% of the time."

Summary

In reviewing the responses to the questions about self-conception several themes emerged:

- 1) While women used a range of self-descriptors, they primarily used terms which focused on qualities in relationships and reflected a connected sense of self.
- 2) Their self-identity was affected and reflected in their conceptualization of themselves in relation to others. A critical issue was sacrificing self for others and including self in the relationship. In the development of self-identity there was a shift away from only giving to others, allowing others to take advantage of them, and confusing the responsibility for their own and others feelings and abilities, toward recognizing their own skills, interests and needs, feeling entitled to respect from others and care for self, and increased self-esteem. Relationships with men posed particular challenges in the development and maintenance of their sense of self.
- 3) Women reported positive effects from their increasing sense of self, such as a sense of personal growth, liberation, and positive self-regard.
- 4) Four groups which reflected different ways of conceptualizing themselves were identified. With the addition of one group, these groupings corresponded to the levels identified by Gilligan in the development of an ethic of care. In the first group, the "Survivalists," the women were primarily isolated, unreflective, saw relationships as generally hurtful and disappointing and were most concerned with their own or their children's basic needs. In

the second group, the "Self-discoverers," women were in transition from being self-sacrificing in their attempts to care for and be responsive to others, to recognizing and feeling entitled to their own needs and interests and developing a sense of their own identity. The women in the third group, the "Self-oriented Carers," were the most diverse and were not included in Gilligan's model. They could both attend to their own needs as well as care for and help others, but tended to be protective of their identity which was not fully integrated. They were actively engaged with further developing their own sense of self and competence. In the fourth group, the "Mutualists," women had a fairly strong sense of identity and interdependent perspective which allowed them to more confidently include themselves and others within the domain of care.

5) Several women named being on one's own as helpful in developing a stronger sense of self.

6) Many women found it difficult to think about themselves in the future, preferred to think about the present and used more external and situational descriptions when they did refer to future changes.

Section Two: Conceptions of the Relationship between Self and Others

In this section I will focus on the second research question, "How do women conceptualize the connection between self and others?" First, I will consider their general orientation toward relationships and then, their negotiation of interpersonal

differences. The lens for analysis was care and justice perspectives. To review, a care perspective centers on caring for oneself and others, being responsive to others needs, maintaining connection and alleviating or avoiding hurt. A justice perspective is concerned with fairness, upholding abstract standards, rules or principles, and fulfilling one's role-related obligations, duties or commitments.

General Orientation toward Relationships with Others

Concerns about helping or hurting self and others were heard repeatedly. While a general orientation toward care was evident in these women's responses, there were different extents of their care, ranging from just their children to society at large. For the women who had children, care and concern for them was an overriding theme. This care and concern for others has already been apparent, and much of it was expressed, in their conceptions of self. Within the domain of care, the women in this study highlighted an overall desire to help; the commitment to work for social justice, especially to aid other Blacks; the connection between care for self and care for others; and the avoidance of hurt to themselves as well as others.

During the interview, Nora, Judy, Joan and Toni reported a general desire to help others.

Nora: I always wanted to be in position to help people.

Judy: I believe that that's what my purpose is here on earth, to help somebody. I wasn't put here to hurt anyone, to help. And helping doesn't mean to me by being in a traditionally helping

profession, like becoming a nurse or a doctor or something like that.

Toni: When I meet people I want to touch them in a way that says there's a positive spark going through. We see too much of the negative, so I want to reach out and touch people, and that has been my main thrust in the last few years, is changing my idea of what my life is about, and being able to make a mark and having it be meaningful to people besides myself.

Joan:I take on the world with the attitude if somebody's hurting, I hurt, too. And, it's like, how can I make it better for you. I wanna go back to my community. And one aspect I don't know, but I feel like I'm wasting myself here. Because I'm not doing anything. I was one of the lucky ones to come out of my community because I came from Boston. I'm one of the lucky ones who came outta the ghetto and was able to get an education, and to be able to move somewhat. So, now, I've been here 13 years and I feel like I wanna go back and do something, but I don't know what, you knowSo, if I change any, maybe it's a change with working for another goal in life in terms of giving something back from what I've gotten here. And, it may not be money. It may be just time--putting in volunteer time somewhere, doing something.

Joan was not alone in her desire to especially help other Blacks. For Toni, this was instilled in her since childhood, "I was also given the task of knowing that being Black, you have to, you have to do the very best you can for others of your race who have not been as fortunate as you."

For some women, the desire to work for social change came out of their own experience with racism.

As Jean stated previously about moving North from the South,

....just with the racism that I've dealt with here.
That has changed me and catalyzed me into becoming actively involved in community activities to try to affect changes, to change other people or at least to begin some kind of dialogue for a change.

Some women indicated a sense of interdependence, making the connection between caring for themselves and caring for other people. They recognized that their well-being affected their ability to be of help to others.

Adele: I find the more I love myself, the more I can do for everybody.

Alice: When I feel good, I have the patience, desire, wanting to listen to others, want others to feel as good as I do, so whatever I can do to help you feel that way, volunteer work, really gratifying and consoling.

Nora: If I'm not healthy, then how can I keep you healthy?

Not only did women talk of their desire to help but also their fear of hurting others and being hurt themselves..

The domain of avoiding hurt included not only other people but also the women themselves, also suggested by Joan above. The fear of being hurt oneself and the need to be protective was expressed by several other women. For Judy and Alice this was, at least in part, a response to racism and aspect of how they described themselves.

Judy: I am open and honest, but when it comes to expressing my innermost feelings, I usually keep those to myself. I guess I feel vulnerable. I feel naked, stripped. And if you know the innermost part of me, then you have that [unin.], that as a result of that I could be hurt. You could hurt me.

So that's my effort at keeping people at arm's length.

Alice: I project a very hard exterior.That's from my adapting to my environment in the inner city, in the ghetto, having to be that tough person, so people wouldn't bother me. So I had to do a lot of fighting when I was growing up.

....There was a time I'd step on someone and I didn't give a damn. I didn't give a shit about anybody, and I didn't. I didn't want to give a shit about it. It was too painful to care about stuff.

Felice: Because I'm very easily hurt. This is why I'm alone. I be by myself most of the time. Cause I'm very easily hurt. ...That's why I don't deal with too many people. Cause people can do those things and they will do it and think nothing about it. But then you say or do the same thing to them and that's terrible.

In Section I, Joan's discussed her difficulty confronting people she was close to because of her fear of hurting them or herself. While elaborating on her concern about hurting people, Joan drew a distinction between personal relationships and work or role relationships.

....I will get into a verbal fight with somebody I feel like is totally wrong--or has said something that really makes no sense. I've even had discussions, I even had verbal discussions with my boss where someone else would say I would never say that to him. But I've had discussions with him and said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute." I look at it in terms, he's younger than I am, and I've had more experience than him, life experience than he's had, so I don't even want him to get on the level to think that he has a right to say these things to me without me responding to him.

So, I can even approach him but there's nothing to lose from that, as far as I can see. He's

someone I work with. And, he has to understand that I've been at this level and he's down on another level and yes he is my supervisor, he's making more money than I am, but it doesn't mean that he's more experienced than I am. So, I'm able to say to those types of people, I have no problem being very verbal with them.

[Is it because you're not afraid of hurting them? You're talking about being afraid of hurting them?]

Right. Right. There's no fear of hurting those people. At all.

According to Jean, job roles make people impervious to be hurt. She sees her "discussions" as feedback which can help herself and the other person grow.

Because they're in a position . I look at it in terms of it's their job and their responsibility to make sure things run well. And, if it doesn't, they have to have that feedback anyways. So, they can't be hurt through it because it's feedback that they can either take it as constructive criticism or they can take it personally. And, if they're really about constructive criticism so they'll listen to what I have to say to them and I try not to go to them with personal things but things that will affect my day to day working with them in making my job easier and making their job easier.

So for me, I can talk to them in that sense and knowing that I'm not hurting them cause it's constructive criticism. And even the feedback they give me, if it's not something that I see as awful, it's constructive criticism to me as well, and to make my life better and my job better. And, it's for me to be able to move in and out of a professional circle where I'm used to working as a secretary. I don't have a lot of knowledge and a lot of training on a professional level. So for me, it's beneficial that I have these conversations with them and verbally say these things because that's part of

growth and learning new knowledge. So, it's not like, I don't look at that in terms of hurting them--at all.

However, in family situations, it is a completely different story.

But with my family, even though it's constructive criticism, you know you still, you may be hurting them. They may take it personal that you're out to attack them on a very personal level when it could be constructive criticism for them to grow. But, of course, they don't look at it that way, cause they're family. They're like, "Well you're my sister, you shouldn't say this or you shouldn't have said it that way." You have to always be careful how you say it. Whereas with your boss it's like, this is the way I feel and this is the way I see it. And you can say it, and you can walk away from it, and you're like neither one of us has been hurt through the process--if it's really about constructive criticism. But, if it's a pick at each other, yeah, people can be hurt by that. But, um, family it's another whole thing.

From Joan's perspective, work relationships, because of job responsibilities and roles, did not require the concerns of care that were expected in family relationships. "There's no fear of hurting those people. I look at it in terms of it's their job and their responsibility to make sure things run well." Personal relationships leave one open to hurt whereas relationships based on duties do not.

The themes of care--helping and hurting, connection and responsibility, were again consistently repeated when the women in this study talked about when they felt good and bad about themselves. Almost all the women mentioned at least one situation in which they judged themselves according to their ability to care.

The following are some examples of their responses to the questions, "When do you feel good about yourself? When do you feel bad about yourself?:"

Judy:

Good--When I've talked to someone else and I know they were helped by it. I feel good about the power I have within myself to make someone else feel better.

Bad--I feel bad about myself that I can't give someone what they need to make them feel better.

Teresa:

Good--...sometimes when I have a good session or a good meeting or a good conversation with my family or friends or something like that, I feel good. Being loved, by a person. When I know that I'm doing something for someone, that makes me feel good about myself. When I'm doing something for me and/or for someone else, that makes me feel good about myself.

I feel good taking care of me. I love me. And so I feel good taking care of me. And if I can extend some of that to someone else, which I do in this job, which I do in my therapy job, which I do in the church, which I do with my family and my friends, and everything that is surrounding me that is part of me, I feel good. I feel good.

Bad--...when there might have been a problem. Like there was this one incident, a work incident, where I don't think I really carried through the proper, I mean I think I was lacking like one step out of like five steps. It was dealing with a family..... and it caused some real concerns.And I felt really bad. But I wanted to try it to see what was gonna happen. And it hurt everybody. And I felt bad. Teresa also focused on the lack of communication and understanding, which are concerns characteristic of a care perspective.

I feel bad when friends or family are hurting. Sometimes I feel bad for them. But I won't tell them I feel bad for them. I'll try to empathize with

them. But sometimes I feel bad if I don't feel well or if I get into an argument with somebody, a boyfriend. If there's something we disagree on, there's just no way he'll understand, I'll feel bad...

[What feels bad about that situation?]

Well, that for whatever reason, we're not communicating and not understanding each other. And I'll feel bad. So in my efforts to want to feel good again, I'll try to over-extend myself to try to let them know that I understand what they're feeling or what they're saying. But still, this is what I'm feeling and this is what I'm saying. And usually I'll be the one who'll make the move because just sometimes people -just don't, they'd rather leave feeling angry or feeling hurt.

Toni:

Good--I finished one of my workshops and I felt like I touched somebody. I felt that these people had changed.

....I think that's big part of me feeling good about myself in that I'm part of my fellow man.

Bad--When I yelled at somebody.

Jean:

Good--When I teach my children about God and about being good to each other and when I can see that, because I can see them doing that. When I can convince myself to do the right thing, whatever that might be.

[How do you know that you're doing the right thing?]

I know. I know. Usually being responsible.

[And what does that mean?]

Sending money where it's needed instead of buying another pair of \$40 shoes, or you know, bullshit. Sacrificing, not always buying for myself and my

children, but sharing and giving. Learning how to talk to people in a kind way and not just lambasting them, beating them half to death with my words even if I'm right. Just accept the fact they're learning too, and I am too. Not going off the deep end.

Adele:

Good--I feel great after a lecture, whenever I lecture. I help these people, you know, my lectures, whenever I do a lecture, it's dynamite and I feel great.

Related to care, the women also identified activities or the quality of interpersonal relationships as times when they felt good or bad about themselves. For example they named time spent with family, new friends, status of romantic relationships, conversations with friends, and ability to understand each other. In addition, accomplishments, the quality of their work, physical and mental health, and physical attractiveness were also mentioned as areas which affected how they felt about themselves.

Negotiation of Interpersonal Differences

In response to the question about a situation where their wants or expectations were different from someone else's, almost all the women interviewed talked about situations which involved family or romantic partners. Most common were occasions which involved husbands or boyfriends. The women predominantly used a orientation of care, most often for self and their own growth, in making and acting on their decision. The kinds of situations they described and the ways they approached them usually reflected the

perspectives and issues salient in their self-definitions. All the women's responses from each group will be reported.

Survivalists

Mary and Felice. As discussed in the first section, compared to the other women in this study, Mary and Felice brought a different perspective to thinking about themselves and their connection to others. Their stories were not filled with the concerns and questions about care and responsibility to other people. As seen in their sense of self, they tended to focus on their own needs and issues of basic survival.

Eventhough the themes of helping and hurting were not central, both Mary and Felice did talk of issues of care. They both talked about having been hurt, especially Felice who gets "easily hurt." Most clear was their concern for the well-being for their children. Since Mary's children are young, whereas Felice's are grown, this creates a difference in how they see their responsibility to them.

Mary spoke several times about caring about her children and helping them do well in school. They are the clear priority in her life.

[What do you care about, think about?]

My kids. My kids and their education.

[In reference to ending a bad relationship with men, with no jobs, doing drugs, and "living the life of the streets:"]

I bent over backwards for them, and then I got tired bending over backwards. And my kids are more important to me than anything. Right now if push comes to shove and hard times come about again and things get rough, it's me and those kids.

I feel as though my most importance is here. Where I find a lot of mothers just don't care, but I do. I definitely do.

Mary also mentioned caring for others, though she can not understand why people seek her out to talk to.

I will do for others. I will always be there for others. I have been put in the position where since I've lived here, the friends that I have, when they have problems, I don't know until this very day, that when they get into predicaments where they need somebody to talk to, they end up calling me [chuckles]. I don't understand why, but ...

Felice talked about how she had been a good mother and worked for what her children needed. Now her perspective is a bit a different.

Cause like I said, my kids, I did everything I could for them and now, you know, they're grown, they're on their own. And when they want to see ma, they'll know where I am. So, I don't have to stay around and nurse them no more. I did enough of that.

Moreover, in many of the other women's stories, there were the themes of trying to balance their own and other people's needs, and of trying to communicate and work things out. That kind of interpersonal process was not highlighted by Felice or Mary.

At one point in the interview Mary stated, "If there's a problem, I'd rather handle it between me and whoever, not physically, but calmly with understanding." Yet, when she ultimately was able to think of a situation where there were different wants or expectations, the process of communication seemed less important. Mary related a scene at Christmas time when she was decorating the house and her husband questioned the placement and quantity of decorations.

And he wasn't used to that. And it was like "Why do you have to put all this stuff up? All you need is a tree. Why are you putting all this stuff in the hallway?" "Because this is what I do." He said, "My goodness you've got the whole house lit up." [laughs] He pretty much understands how I am now. I guess he finally realized that I'm the type of person that, I like to decorate. I like to do things around the house. And if anybody's in my way they get sent out [laughs]. "Move out of the way." "Do that later." "No, I'm ready to do it now. I will do it now." I will shut off the TV and everybody will have to leave. Of course they go stomping up the stairs and they get mad, but too bad. It pretty much happens some times.

...I explained to him that that's the way I am.

Felice told of a time when she wanted to buy a house with her husband. Although she also did not talk about the situation with her husband she sited very different reasons and outcome.

'Cause I wanted that house so bad I could see it. I could almost taste it. And it was so beautiful. And he didn't want no part of it. Because he never even mentioned it no more. Never. You know, and after he said that, when we were there that day with the realtor, he said that about having to see his lawyer before he'd sign any papers. He has never mentioned it since. Never.

[And so what did you do in that situation?]

What could I do? That's when I started looking for another apartment cause I didn't like the one where I was living. And that's when this lady asked me, was I Black? She had a six room apartment. That's what she said. So I said, well, you can forget about that one.

[How did you decide though initially not to continue to discuss it once he said he was gonna have to go see his lawyer?]

I'm telling you I'm very independent. Very. So I said, he don't want to talk about it, I don't want to talk about it either. The subject is closed -- as far as I'm concerned. Because he would only come out and say something to upset me. To make me real mad. Say something real nasty. Like, if you wanna buy a house, girl, you go on and buy it or something like that. And see, I wanted it for me and him and the kids, to enjoy....

Felice's desire for the house was not only for herself, but also for the well-being of her family.

....Well, I wanted it because I wanted, you know, like my daughter, I wanted her to have a bedroom. And the boys, like two to a room, you know. And I could picture myself with that. And I was so hurt after he refused. This is why I didn't get into it. Because I'm very easily hurt.

For both Mary and Felice their experiences of being disappointed and hurt in relationships seems to make them self-protective. Their concern for getting their own (and their children's) needs met takes precedence over considering the needs of others and having a broader scope of their care.

Self-Discoverers

Both Barbara and Nora used considerations of care in their negotiations of interpersonal differences. Whereas for Barbara, care for her husband as well as herself was the focus, for Nora, care for herself and her children was primary. Their vulnerabilities and struggles around their own self-identity and needs were seen in their stories.

Barbara. Barbara discussed a situation about deciding whether to make love with her husband. Characteristic of her self-definition, there is an intermingling of her feelings and his feelings and a lack of direct assertion.

My husband has had the flu for three days.And we haven't been making love because he wasn't able really.And he's feeling a little better and says "Well, would you like to make love?" He says "No, no because you're tired." So I said, "Well, you know, I really wouldn't mind. It might be nice." And I've been doing things for other people, for the kids.

So I said, "Well, here's a time for me and my husband to be together, no interruptions, no whatever. And this is something that he really would like to do. I'm gonna." So sometimes it's a thing you process. It's not always well yes or no. Sometimes I think of reasons why I should or why I shouldn't.

She explained how she made the decision to make love. While it seems like she would like to, Barbara framed it as caring for him.

Well, because I figured I needed to spend some quality time with him, not just bringing him another glass of water or another cup of tea or some soup or whatever. I was taking care of his illness. This would be with him, just with him, as my husband, instead of this man I've been taking

care who's kind of really a pain in my behind.... So this would be a nice part.

I mean he was starting to feel a little better and I wanted him to continue to feel better. And sometimes making love makes you feel real good, so I figure, well, why not? Besides it could make me feel good too, and it did!

Nora. Nora talked about her marital problems and their recent separation. The issues around her sense of self-- saying no, being taken seriously and caring for herself, were evident in this situation.

....there was a little separation there and at that point I didn't want to be bothered.I was dead set against, no leave me alone, go wherever you have to go, do whatever you have to do. Just leave me alone. Where he wanted the total opposite. He wanted it to work. He wanted everything to be kosher and it just wasn't working. And he had moved out for awhile. And he was making himself present without me wanting him there. And that is an awful, I mean it's a feeling that I don't know how to explain..... somebody there that you don't want to be there but they want to be there.

As we saw earlier, her bitterness was a response to feeling taken advantage of and fueled her ability to set limits and be "selfish." Consistent with a care perspective, part of the problem in the relationship was that he wasn't listening. Even if she could not get rid of him physically, she could "tune him out," thus severing the sense of connection.

But I got bitter. I got bitter like, I tuned him out. So what, you're here physically, I can walk by you like you're that chair sitting there. Doesn't bother me. I don't have to say anything to you unless it's absolutely necessary.

But here again we have a situation where people just don't listen. The message is not going across. And that's another thing that sparks me to say, I have to be selfish.

Again she was faced with the challenge to assert herself and have people take her seriously. Her attention was on being listened to, not her husband's feelings or perspective.

....it was like wait, if I don't say something and make it sound like it has to stick, you know because I have been, I can say something to people and they can write it off, one way or another. But then when I speak, if I speak in the right tone and take away the smiles, take away the glee in the voice, then I can make it stick. I said, well hey, this is gonna stick. And there's no two ways about it. This is what I want done. This is how it's gonna be done. If that's not how it's gonna be done, forget it.

Nora named financial issues and child care for her children and the effect on them as things at stake in her decision to separate from her husband. She also noted that her well-being affects her children. Care for herself and her children predominated.

....do I sit here and make myself miserable for other people? And then I said, no, because if I did that then the whole house was miserable, because they reflect off Mom.

It provided her with another example of her ability to say no and feel good about it.

[So how do you feel about the decision?]

Good. Real good. Like I said, that was one of those situations where I said, no, and walked away and said, wow, I can still smile about this. I don't have any regrets. Nobody's gonna stab me in the back for

saying no. And that really helped. Because I never thought I could get to that point. Never.

Self-Oriented Carers

Again, this is the least uniform group. In most of these stories, there is an effort to be caring to all involved, to pay attention to communication and to try to work things out. However there was little mention of the perspective or feelings of the other. Ultimately, care for oneself predominates with a strong assertion of one's sense of self and need to grow.

Jean. Jean emphasis on self-development is seen in how she talks about her difference with her family about moving North. She would not compromise herself to fulfill their dream. While she was clear about their expectations she did not talk about the effect of her decision on her family.

When I got ready to come up here. They laughed. The whole family. They thought it was hilarious. They rolled. You should have seen them. They thought it was hilarious. Me, with two babies, going where?
.. And, I think that what they expected from me was to graduate from nursing school and be a nurse. And be nice....you know that wasn't the deal. I was seeing a man then and they loved him. They just loved him. He was supposed to be my husband as far as my family was concerned. And that just..that wasn't what I was looking at. He was ready to die in the suburbs.

Jean needed to grow and develop herself, and be happy.

I wanted, I needed to finish my education cause I felt like I hadn't done that. I needed to travel. I needed to feel like I was free to make a lot of my own choices. And I knew that if I was working for a hospital I wouldn't be doing that. And if I was

married to this man in the suburbs with his station wagon and his sheep dog I wouldn't be doing that. And, you know, I guess they were trying to say to me in other words well what's wrong with that. That's life. You know, you get an engineer to marry you and put you up somewhere, what's wrong with you? And, that wasn't what I wanted. That's not what I needed.

I was not going to marry that man and I wasn't going to have to retire in a hospital. I was looking for something different. I mean cause I would have died. I really would have died. So, I was going somewhere and I was going to do something. And they were just hoping I didn't go to far. And, I don't know, as I said I knew I just had to do what made me happy. And that was real hard.....

As seen in other stories, what was at stake for Jean was her care for herself which was also connected to her care for her children.

My development and my growth because that would ultimately determine what I could provide and what I couldn't provide for my children. ...And I knew I wouldn't have been able to travel. And I really wanted to learn. I just, I don't know. I wasn't even sure what I wanted to study. I just wanted to continue learning. And I wasn't sure what.

Jean primarily framed her decision in terms of her responsibility to herself but also considered how her own growth would affect her ability to provide for her children.

Joan. Joan used both care and justice reasoning in discussing her situation and decision to end a relationship with a man. She first described her efforts to work it out without giving up her sense of self.

I feel bad now because the relationship broke up over Thanksgiving, and we worked at it for a long

time but it was just his expectations. I could not live up to his expectations, you know. I could if I decided that I would just give in totally. And I felt like I didn't want, I wasn't going to give in totally. I wanted compromise. He didn't know how to talk about it. So, we had worked on it for a year and a half. We got to a level where we said, 'Okay, yeah, yeah, we can do this,' but then midstream we decided this isn't what I wanted. And I said, 'But this is not who I am. You can't change me.' All you can hope for is for compromise. And it's the same thing with you. I can't change you. All I can hope for is compromise. That you will be flexible. And someday I will not cook. Someday I will not clean. But you're to understand all that and you'll help me out.' And he said he couldn't do that. So for me it was like, this relationship can't go any further. This is it. We're not gonna move in another direction.

Another factor in Joan's decision to end the relationship was her boyfriend's young daughter who would require care and attention which Joan had hoped to give to herself.

And a lot of the problem also had to do with he had a five year old daughter. Then that meant I would go back into more mothering. And it was like talking a little bit more of myself. And how much of the self would I have left? Between the kids, and between him, how much of the self would I have, and it just felt I was closed in, and that there was no other way to go but to come out of the relationship because I didn't want the responsibility of another small child. If he had an older child, who could care for herself, and a lot of the responsibility wouldn't be on me. Because he wasn't, he looked at it in terms of his parenting would be as a provider and that's it.

Joan not only considered the care for herself but also her ability to care for the young girl.

..So, for me it meant I couldn't give as much of myself to her and that is a form of abuse for me. That I couldn't give that much of myself. And it wasn't fair to her to put her in that position. She needed a mother and that's something I didn't want to be. So I just said it was time to end the relationship. And that was very painful because I had worked on this.

Because he was getting a lot of advice from his friends. And the advice he was getting from his friends was, 'Don't allow her to do that. Don't let her do that, I mean, you're the man, you know. You don't let a woman do that.' And basically that's what he did. He came back with the, 'I'm the man, you're the woman.' And I went off. I just went totally off on him. I'm like, 'Where did this come from? Who have you been talking to?' And, I said, 'You're really putting yourself in dangerous water here talking that way to me because that doesn't work for me. And you've know this from the day that you've met me.' Because I've been very vocal with him on who I am as a person and what my expectations were.

.... But I said that that's the worst thing you can do. Because in my family structure the predominance is women, you know. And, somehow my mother, whatever she did, and she never was verbal on it, there was a sense of strength and independence in us.

Joan finally began to talk of rights and fairness-- equal treatment and consideration.

I can't go with that controlling and manipulating. I can't accept that. Because I'm a person--with my thoughts, my feelings, my aspirations. The same as a man. So I can't see myself being lower than he is. I'm not. I feel like I'm equal. He has certain strengths because of his body structure and that's the only difference. I don't want those. I can accept me being a woman with the limitations as such but I'm still a person--with the same goals, aspirations and desires--the same needs. It's just that we're....sexual....male/female. That's it. So, for a man that's difficult.

Joan was adamant in maintaining her sense of identity and respect, even though it may cost her relationships.

.....And in my interactions with men I'm very clear on that. I'm a person and you have to accept me as a person, or else you don't have anything with me. And I mean, I've lost men due to that but it's, for me it hasn't been a loss in terms of I'm losing something because if you can't go into a relationship with someone who knows who they are then you don't have anything, you know, you don't have anything.

I've always had this thing about my independence, and, me who I am as a person, as opposed to these men who say who I am as a person. So, I've been on my own and I've been doing this totally, I've come close to marriage twice. And each time I've backed out of it. Because I knew that I couldn't give or meet those needs because of who I am as a person.

Joan referred to the responsibility both to herself to maintain her identity and grow, as well as to the child in not wanting to hurt her by inadequate care. She employed the concepts of justice and fairness when she appealed to the equality of men and women and expected the same consideration as a man.

Judy. Judy also expressed her unwillingness to sacrifice herself for a relationship and emphasized the need for people to take responsibility for themselves.

I guess that was probably recently when I had an alcoholic ex-boyfriend. [Sighs] He just emotionally damn near wore me out, because he wanted to lean, lean, lean, lean, lean on me. Lean on me.

Judy expected mutuality and a relationship that would support them both.

I expected wind under my wings! I expected that as a couple we would grow together, that we had the potential to do great things, you know, for the benefit of both of us. But they couldn't get themselves to that point because all they wanted to do was draw on my strength. I had to be strong enough to not just carry my load but his too, because he wasn't emotionally strong enough, and he just drew on me constantly. I'm the battery, and he drained me, you know?

Judy decided to end the relationship because she could not help him and she was being hurt. She reasserted her sense of independence.

What did I do? Cut him loose! I worked with him as long as I could, but he was a dependent, and I'm very independent. ...I believe I can take care of myself. I don't need anybody to take care of me. The only thing anybody else can do is make it easier for me to take care of myself. And if they can't do that, then I don't have any need for them. So I got rid of him, because he became a liability.

How did I decide to do that? Very easily. He was causing me stress and strain. He was makin' me go backwards to the way I used to feel, down and depressed and oh for Christ's sakes, get away! You're not helping. You're drawing on my energy. You're sapping my strength. I'm trying to make some progress in my life. I'm trying to move on. And you're just drawing on it, you're holding me back. You're trying to pull me into the quicksand too, and I'm not going. So I cut him off!

And it took a while to do it, because I kept trying to be there, be a support system, help him get over the things. Some people do need that. And so ok, I'll help if I can. But helping for him was me doing. He wanted me to do everything. He wanted

me to take the taste of alcohol away from him. He wanted me to make sure that there was a roof.

You can't be a liability to someone else. You got to be liable to yourself. When I realized that the situation wasn't going to get any better, that as long as I stayed in this relationship, it wasn't going to get better, it was going to just get worse and worse and worse, because that's what was going on.And once I recognized what it was, I recognized that there was nothing I could do about it. Then I put in motion the process of cutting this individual off, putting him out there.

Judy felt that the loneliness was better than a relationship which limited her and did not allow her to grow.

I'm sorry, I'm not going to waste any more of my life. Because that's what I was doing. Tomorrow's not promised. Today's not promised. The next moment is not promised to us, and because I feel the way I do about life, I can't let anybody sap the life out of me. I can't let anybody do that. I just can't, because I don't know how long I'm going to be here on this earth. And I'm not finished with myself. There's things that I want to do. And if I let someone else get in the way of that, I'm not going to accomplish my goals. I'm going to cut him loose.I had to weigh the lesser of the two evils, and the lesser of the two evils is that you accept this lack of companionship, this loneliness.

Though in the passage above Judy said decided to end the relationship "very easily," Judy now says that she felt badly and that it took some time to really accept that she did the right thing. She struggled with feeling responsible for him.

Bad, bad, because I knew because of the illness, the sickness that it would be very easily said that I was the cause of it, and I worried about that to a small degree. I didn't feel good about having to do that. I didn't want to do that. I used to pray that

this person would see the light and pull themselves together and be responsible for themselves, be what you're supposed to be. Don't depend on anybody else to be what they can't. So I kind of felt bad about it, in a way. But then again, I had to keep in my mind that hey, I didn't cause this. I'm the one that tried to help, so why should I feel bad about it? I did what I could do.

So then I began to feel good because I knew what I did, and what I did was right and positive. It was for the betterment of all. And I don't think I should suffer. And I'm not going to, for anybodyAnd I don't take responsibility for anyone except myself. And I won't let anybody impinge upon it. So on that note, I was able to finally get rid of him. It was hard too, because he couldn't believe it. He kept coming back and coming back. Jesus, ok, but I had to do it, and so it was done. So I found that I had the strength to do those things. So I learned that about myself. That's when I learned that I don't have to, that's when I learned to stop letting people depend and rely on me because of that.

And it didn't stop just like that. There was still a little bit of a relationship there. I still cared, but I didn't reach out, and when he did I'd slap his hand to keep him, to make him be responsible for himself. So it's only been a couple of years.

While Judy tried hard to help this man, she was unwilling to do it at the expense of her own well-being. She ultimately felt good about the decision to end the relationship because it was for the "betterment of all."

Adele. Adele had a very difficult time thinking of any situations in which her needs, wants or expectations were different from someone else's.

No,.....it doesn't come up too much in my life because usually what I expect is what the other

person expects too.I don't have anything like that coming up in my life really.

No. Nothing like that.

Speaking about situations in general, Adele emphasized the importance of communication and her recent ability to be more assertive.

Well, I try to have everything very specific and very clear from the beginning so much so that I'll even write it down, and if there's a discrepancy I have something to fall back on--what I've written down. But that hasn't come about. And especially not here cause we all love each other and get along very well. It hasn't come up.

[So you think that's a sign of people not loving each other. That if people love each other the differences won't come up?]

Well, at least if the differences do come if you love each other, the best thing to do is sit down and talk about it, clear the air. Make your needs known. I mean, how's the other person gonna know what you like and what you want if you don't tell them? We do this at.....tell them. You got to be a little, not aggressive, assertive. Yes, I have become much more assertive.

Finally, Adele identified a situation in which by maintaining her care for someone, Adele could also feel good about herself. She described a time when her neighbor reported her to her supervisor for taking bags of food and clothing home from work. This was an appropriate part of Adele's job since she distributed them to people who needed them.

And when I told the staff about it they said I shouldn't talk to her. And I continued to say hello to her. For two years she wouldn't speak to me--a

year and a half she wouldn't speak to me. What goes around comes around. Suddenly she started talking to me.

Adele continued to be nice to her. At the request of a different neighbor, Adele wrote a letter for her to get custody of her granddaughter, which she got. Adele then received a Christmas card from her.

All I did was wait and treat her as nicely as I could. And people couldn't believe that I was doing it. The whole neighborhood knew about it. They couldn't understand it, and I said, you know, in situations like this, you have to turn the other cheek, and I believe that was my first bit of awakening with being born again. Really I was shaping Susan [her mentor and role model] not knowing what I was doing, and it worked. It worked.

Though Adele maintained a caring posture in regards to this woman, she acknowledged that this is behavior that has yet to be fully owned and integrated into herself.

Adele named another situation which reflected a change in how she handles interpersonal differences. While keeping their interest in mind, she is able to be more direct with people.

Somebody would come in with liquor on their breath and I'd give 'em the food. Now, I said, 'The only way I'm going to give you this f'od is if I can refer you to our outpatient department.' The only thing I can do is a referral, whether they do it or not. 'And I see you need some help. So, I'm not going to subsidize your income.' I wouldn't say that at one time. Now I do.

Or I'll say, somebody will sit down for employment and I'll say, 'Look, you got to go there in your best bib and tucker. Right now, we can start now. Go in, there's a nail brush in their, go in

and brush your nails. I said I'm going to refer you to some prospect of ours, you have to go represent yourself looking right.' Yes, I'll come out and say that. If somebody has a body odor or something, I'll come tell them but there was one time when I wouldn't do it.

Adele is now willing to risk being disliked or hurting people at the present if she feels it will help them in the long run. This is based on her own experience. Her concern for others, outweighs her need to win their approval.

Well, maybe no one else has made them aware of it. Maybe in the long run, they'll thank me for it. They might not like it, it might hurt them at first but in the long run, they'll say, gee, I'll thank her for this.

I don't care how they feel about me now. But in the long run, especially if it's a young person, cause that's the way I felt myself when I was young, I didn't want to take this advice. I look back on it and gee, such and such helped me at one time.

Mutualists

All of the women in this group initially discussed a situation that occurred many years in the past (between about 10 to 26 years ago). They were then asked if they could think of a more recent time. The early as well as the more current examples will be reported since the past situations were clearly important events for these women and were often significant in their self-development. A care orientation was most evident. Eventough their decisions often rested on responsibility and care for themselves, like the Self-Oriented Carers, they seemed less reactive and emphatic about preserving their identity and developing themselves.

Alice. Alice recounted a "traumatic" experience that occurred with a man in college. While she expected to be supported for her educational goals, she found she needed to make a choice between that relationship and completing her education. Her decision ultimately rested on her commitment to herself to grow and be happy.

This was some man I was totally in love with to that I centered my whole life around him. If you ever had a soulmate, I thought this person was it--you have the same thoughts, like the same things, and he finished your sentences.

Alice needed to leave college early to attend to family needs.

Things started to fall apart because he was still in school. And for me it was real important because I was starting to grow, a little bit more than when I was in grad school and it was real important for me to continue to grow. And he wanted to just get married. He said, 'Let's just get married. I want you to marry me. I don't want to have to compete with your education.' Blah, blah, blah.

And that was like real traumatic for me to deal with.This person wanting something else out of the relationship and me wanting something else at that time which led to our separation.It took me a long time to cope with that and understand that.

Involved in her decision was choosing to stay North where her family was or returning to the South where she went to school and where her boyfriend was.

I decided to stay here. I just felt like, 'My educational goals were here long before you were and I'm sorry that you feel like you have to compete with them, you should be supportive, saying it's a good opportunity for you. Not only for

me but for us if we stay together.' But he didn't see that and he was threatened. So therefore I said, "I have to make this choice here, and I'm sorry. I'm sure it was an easy choice because, my family was here also.

[How did you make that decision?]

....I knew I wouldn't grow there. I knew I would die, I would just die.

Alice said she is still "processing" that decision. She still maintains a connection with him and visits his family when she is in the South visiting her own family. When his family still asks her why she didn't marry him and just follow his wishes she explains to them:

I really love him and still care about him, but it wouldn't have been a wise choice. He would have been happy and I would have been unhappy.If it was meant to be, we would be together.

Her more recent example about a work relationship was less clear. Alice began by saying that in general she has very open communication with the people she works with. She then told of a disagreement with her supervisor, which ended up as an argument. Alice began to notice elitist attitudes and power issues in her supervisor which bothered her. The situation was not resolved and there was still some tension in their relationship. Because of other stresses, Alice had not fully addressed it. Alice felt particularly disappointed by this since she has a personal relationship with this woman. She seemed to be concerned not for her job, but for the loss (at least temporarily) of a friendship.

Toni. In Toni's responses, though she includes other people in the situations, the struggles really seem to be primarily with herself. In her first example, Toni told of one of her first jobs in the corporate world.

I wanted very badly to perform well because it was an all White male environment and I wanted to do the very best I could do. I did not want them to think I was there just for favors.

....I thought that if a job were given to me, this job that I was to do some work with top execs, I thought that I was expected to take the job when it was offered to me.They expected me to take it only if I was ready. I thought they expected me to take it because it was offered.

....And I was not prepared for it. And it was a hurting, learning experience because I wasn't ready.

When asked what was at stake for her in her decision to accept that job she replied,

My reputation was at stake. My self-esteem was at stake.in addition to my self-esteem and my reputation was my confidence.

Toni draws the distinction between confidence, which "comes from within" and self-esteem which is "dealing with what other people think about you." She was most concerned with her confidence and how she felt about herself.

At that time I was really low in confidence. I didn't know whether I could do the job. I thought I had failed miserably, and so I didn't know whether I could continue. Then again, you have support systems and you have your inner strength and you pull yourself above that.

In her recent situation, Toni talked about her decision to try to finish her degree in a year, since she and her family might move,

or just take a few classes which would be less pressure. Her husband supported her trying to finish though, "he wasn't pushing me."

And in the back of my mind I knew I shouldn't [try to finish], but I thought, "Well, Oh yeah, you're probably right because I don't want this hanging over my head if I leave."

She ultimately realized that it was taking on too much and said, "I think I'm going to back off." "And that decision had nothing to do with him."

The things at stake for her in that decision primarily involved having the time to develop her new business and to spend quality time with her children and husband. Toni was particularly pleased with the way she could deal with the fact she did not make the right decision.

Now surprisingly though I haven't beat myself over the head with it, as I would have done in the past.Because many times, many years ago, maybe a few years ago, I would have felt really, really bad about it. I don't feel bad about it. I saw an opportunity. I didn't make the right decision, but at the same time, throughout the semester I've known I haven't make the right decision, but have taken steps to correct it.

As she discussed in her self-description, she could now accept her mistakes and make the necessary amends. Toni's self-confidence, which she expressed concern about in the first situation, seems much better established in this current example. The consideration of her own growth in light of her responsibility to her family is again illustrated.

Teresa. Teresa related one of the few stories that used a perspective of justice. In her example in the past, she talked about her rights to take a class in college.

I was interested in journalism and I was sitting down having a conversation with an advisor, who was telling me that Blacks were not real good in journalism. And I said, well why won't they make it in journalism. An he said, 'Because journalism is a White field.' And I said, 'Well that shouldn't take away from my wanting to take journalism courses.' Her opinion was totally different from mine. She was really trying hard to persuade me to not go in that field even to the point of of not financing me for the program. And I was pissed. So, I was 18 and I wrote a letter to her supervisor--another tactic! I conferenced with my mother first, you know, cause she was always back up and everything. And wrote a letter to the supervisor.

When asked how she felt about this decision, Teresa focused on the fact that she had tried hard to talk with and negotiate with the advisor but finally had to write this letter.

Well it was direct. The letter came after many, many meetings with this woman. I mean there had to be about five. And the letter was a good way of saying 'OK, I've met with you five times , we haven't gone anywhere. I even told you the fifth time that, if you could at least negotiate or come to some kind of agreement, I would be looking into not talking to your supervisor or whatever. But when I got to that point I was lost...'

At stake for Teresa were her rights as well as her self-respect as a Black person.

My opinions and my rights. My rights to education, to be educated. My right and my opinion. My, I mean I don't care what anyone says but no one is going to take away my pride and my dignity.And my

rights were at stake. I felt that my rights were violated and, and then the opinion of this person I felt was racist,I felt that if I were in her shoes, I think I would've reworded it a different way. I don't think I would've, that was purely unprofessional and inappropriate, the way that she advised me. And so my rights were at stake.

In recent example, Teresa used the language of rights in explaining her decision to end a relationship yet, she seemed to be acting out of care for herself. Also typical of a care orientation was her concern for communication, understanding the other person's perspective and maintaining connection.

....in a relationship there was recently, with a person for four years. This person wanted to, uh, didn't want to get married and I did. But this person wanted to cling on and get sexual services and experience. I convinced him that in order for us both to be strong we should still remain being friends but not pretend to be lovers, you know what I mean. If we're not, if it's not leading anywhere.

....I felt I needed to speak up and tell him what I didn't wanna do. And what I didn't want to do is continue to have the relationship that we had had for the last three or four years and it not leading to anything.

....Well, you know, after giving it a lot of thought and seeing him, I decided that we needed to talk. And that I needed to tell him how I was feeling. When the feeling came, when I began to feel this way, um, I usually think it over. And for me I think it took about two or three weeks to really think it over. To be sure this is the way I felt. And to not talk about it with anyone, because I didn't want anyone to influence or have any kind of weight on my decision. I mean this was something that I really believed in and wanted to do.

That our relationship was very special and it always will be. Even if I marry, it, we'll still

continue to be friends. But not intimate, into physical contact.I said, "We really need to come to terms with it. I mean, you're feeling this way, I'm feeling that way. You told me how you've been feeling and for the last two or three weeks now, I've been thinking about the way you've been feeling. But I've also been thinking about the way that I feel. And we just don't mesh. And, you know, so you need to look at some different ways of being friends, and not continue the way we've been doing." So that's what's happened. And he's slowly coming around.

Though Teresa mentioned rights, she seems to be referring again to the need for her own self-respect and sense of consistency in her life.

My rights....being able to say what I want and not being dependent on men, or anyone. And to not feel that I'd been taken advantage of. Or feel that I have to be tied into this relationship because, um, there is no one else available. That I would never do. I would go with no one than have to do that. I mean I thought about all those things, I thought about reasons, I thought about a lot of things. But when I see my clients, and I give them advice, I mean, I'm supposed to be able to give some to myself, too. And it just wouldn't make sense to talk with friends and give advice or listening to clients and kind of empower them to change their lives, to finally get out of a relationship, and I'm not doing it. You know, so it all, it just makes sense. And I saw what my mother did with my father. And she wouldn't take it either. So it originated there, I guess.

Carol. Carol's first story occurred at the time she discussed earlier when she "got liberated" and was being "Hard-nosed Hannah." She decided to run for school committee without concern for her

husband's perspective or feelings. She also did not mention the rest of her family.

I'm not so sure that my husband liked the thought of my running for school committee at all. I mean it wasn't a case that we sat down across the supper table and I said, 'You know, well, if you don't want me to go, I won't go.' I didn't say that.

I didn't care whether he wanted me to do it or not. I was gonna do it. And I felt that I had been deprived so long.

I'm sure it was purely selfish. I'm sure it was the thought of, 'Yeah, okay, this is another way to get me recognition. ...And I was very cocky you know.'

Carol said she felt good about that decision and would do it again, though, "I'm sure the approach would've been different." "....I didn't have any second thoughts."

As she talked more about how this affected her relationship with her husband she said she expected to be supported after all the time she had supported him.

I was happy because you were happy. Now I expect you to feel the same for me.

As Carol has continued to pursue her own growth and as they have tried to make adjustments, Carol has at times felt badly but has tried to keep the communication open.

At many times I felt very cruel because I did not take him with me. Although the opportunity was there. There was opportunity for him to grow that way.

I do most of the giving in, and he doesn't talk about it.So I have to make the overtures. '...Cause I like it right on the table.'

Carol's recent situation, on the one hand, seems to demonstrate a similar dynamic of doing what she feels is right without much attention to her husband's feelings. On the other hand, though it involved an interpersonal disagreement with her husband about their vacation, she illustrates a broader conception of care.

Maybe we were supposed to go to Phoenix and I don't know whether, I don't whether it was the mayor or somebody, they were having a difficult time. Anyway, they wouldn't allow Martin Luther King holiday or something to be celebrated. Well anyway, we camped out. My husband washow could you do this. I mean this was our vacation, blah, blah, blah. And I said, well you know, tell you what, if you as a Black are not gonna be welcome in Phoenix, why should we go? And he was more or lessof the thing. We had no right to do that. I said, well let's get another place to go. I mean but you certainly, I mean, I had told him that Blacks nationwide were boycotting Phoenix and nobody was gonna go there I mean if it affects people nationwide, it affects us. And if one Black is not free, neither are we. And we would be tremendous turncoats if we went into Phoenix, thought we were enjoying ourselves and here this guy doesn't want us there. Okay, so the whole city has to suffer until they got him.My kids understood it but my husband didn't.

[What was at stake for you in that decision?]

I guess the whole principle of um, that whole thing of I'm going some place and not being accepted, but more or less letting a lot of people down. I felt that if one Black person wasn't free than neither were we. And that our responsibility was to assist in that part.

Carol's reasoning is based on the care orientation notion of interdependence, "If it affects people nation wide it affects us. And

if one Black in not free, neither are we." Though she used the term "principle" she seemed concerned with "not letting a lot of people down" and the responsibility to assist in in the struggle for freedom.

Common Themes in Interpersonal Negotiations

Salient in many of these stories is the concern for caring for oneself and not being self-sacrificing. Consistent with a care orientation, it seems that in romantic relationships, the women assumed that there would be a shared responsibility for each other's welfare, yet found this not the case. They tried to support and consider the needs of the other but did not receive that help and support in return. It therefore became necessary to rely on the responsibility and care for oneself.

Throughout the situations described, there was great attention given to the process of coming to a decision. They were concerned with communication, understanding and being understood. Many of the women referred to the fact that they had tried to work it out and had talked about it with the other person but finally realized that they were unable to find a mutually satisfying resolution. They were unwilling to sacrifice themselves to resolve the difference.

Summary

1. The general orientation to relationships was characterized by a care perspective which was reflected in their desire to help people and their concern for inflicting hurt. This included working

for social justice, especially for other Blacks; noting the connection between caring for themselves and helping others; and attempting to avoid hurt to themselves.

2. Women tended to judge themselves by their ability to care, both for themselves and others.

3. Almost all the situations of interpersonal differences involved family and romantic partners. Women predominantly used a orientation of care, particularly for self, in resolving those situations. They assumed that the care for the other would be reciprocated. However, they found that they ultimately needed to make the choice of care for themselves at the expense of the relationship, or at least a romantic partnership. These women based their decisions on their own need to grow.

4. The situations and ways of addressing them were generally consistent with the manner in which they described themselves. The Survivalists tended to center on their own and their children's needs (and to some extent their children's) and paid little attention to the process. The Self-Discoverers, while they both considered their own needs, Barbara was more focused on caring for her husband and Nora was more focused on herself and her children. The Self-Oriented Carers, again diverse, were generally characterized by an effort to be caring to themselves and others and to work things out, with an emphasis on their own self-assertion. The Mutualists spontaneously provided examples from many years ago, and then responded with more recent situations. They tended to consider the feelings and needs of others and to attempt to keep connected but maintained their responsibility and care to themselves. Carol was

primarily concerned with a larger sense of interdependence with other Blacks and Teresa gave the only situation which reflected a predominantly rights orientation.

Section Three: Ontology

This section will focus on the third research question, "What are women's ontological perspectives or sense of being in the world?" The analysis is based on responses to the statement "If you think about life, each person is a separate individual leading his or her own life." They were also asked if there was a metaphor or image that captured their perspective. Their answers reflected both the notions of separateness and connectedness, as well as care and justice. Some women initially agreed with the statement but had previously spoken about care and responsibility for others. In those cases, I further probed their responses and asked if there were any ways they saw people as connected.

The women spoke most extensively in terms of connectedness and interrelatedness, which had many different dimensions. These included the affect our lives have on other people, responsibility to others, spiritual interconnection and oneness and joining for common goals. The scope of persons mentioned in the context of connection ranged from family members to all human beings. When they talked in terms of separateness or individuals, they usually interpreted individual to mean unique and separateness to mean that you couldn't live someone else's life for them. It was particularly interesting to see how these women interpreted the statement and defined the terms.

Moreover, the issues which these women have grappled in the other parts of their stories, responsibility for self and others, and creating appropriate boundaries, resurfaced in their statements about ontology. The responses from the women in each group will be considered.

Survivalists

Once again, Mary and Felice responded in ways that sounded different from the others. Their sense of separateness which underlied their other conceptions, was also evident in their responses to the ontological statement.

Mary. Mary reiterated her feelings of "I won't bother you if you don't bother me."

It's true. It's most definitely true. Oh yeah. I always thought that way. Everybody has to live a life. Everybody has to have their turn in life. You also have to understand what goes on out there, and they have to learn that on their own. You've got to learn from your mistakes. It's not an easy world out there. You never know what's going to happen from one day to the next. You can only take one day at a time. Everybody has to have a share of living and dying. That's pretty much the way things are. Nobody can change it for you. You can't change it for anybody else. We're all separate individuals.

Her feelings of disempowerment and hopelessness arose she responded to how she might see people as connected.

Well, the only way I can see us connecting to each other, everybody connecting to each other is everybody can learn to get along with each other, and that is impossible.But I'm the type of person, I could live anywhere as long as nobody bothers me and I don't bother them. But you can't

live like that. That's very hard to do that here. But there's really not much you can do.

Felice. Felice's answer referred only to marriage. This related to her own feelings of unhappiness in her marriage which she talked of quite a bit throughout the interview.

That's true. That is true. That's why I say it's hard to have a good marriage if you're not thinking on the same terms. Yup.

[Any ways that you think that isn't true? That we're not separate and just living our own individual lives?]

That's true. You, most of the time you are living your own separate life even though you're supposed to be married. And that's what happened, with my husband and I. He lived his life, you know, and contributed so much towards bringing, you know, help with the kids, and I, you know, he depended on me to do the rest. Live our own separate lives.

[And you think that's true for people in general?]

Yeah. I really do. Yup. I really do. You hear of it so much. No togetherness. Even though you're supposed to be husband and wife, but you live your own life, and I live mine. That's the way it is.

[Is that true also in non-marriage situations? Not necessarily with husbands and wives but just with people in general?]

People in general? Yeah. Yeah. But..... I don't know. I've tried so many ways and tried all I could, you know, to buy a house, make a nice home and everything, nnaahhh.

....Because I found out over the years that he don't wanna give me anything. So, you don't want to give me nothing, I don't want nothing. That's just

the way I am. I'll do without, if I can't get it. Yup. Black, proud and independent. That sums it up.

Self-Discoverers

Barbara and Nora's concern with establishing a separate identity and sense of control in their lives is seen in their emphasis on the need to respect each individual, their path and their choices. This does not exclude the fact that our lives intertwine and that we need each other for survival or support.

Barbara. Barbara stressed that you can't live another person's life, but added that we do affect each other and need to band together for survival and common goals.

.... everyone has their own life, everyone has their own path. And who am I to step into that path and try to change it for them in any direction? Except my children, because they're still young, and there are still things that they don't know yet. But as for myself or my husband or any other adult, it's your life. ...And we all have to live for ourselves. It took a long time for me to get to that too.

[You also mentioned that you believe that we are our brother's keeper (Um hum) and that we do need to take care of our families and our friends and our community. How does that fit with also believing that we separately lead our own lives.]

Because I don't think that even though we have separate lives, we all touch, each of us touches several different lives. Like when my husband was ill and had gone into treatment, it just didn't affect him. It affected all his brothers who live in different places in the country, his parents, his sister, my family, because all my family lives here except my sister. My parents, our church, his friends,

people he works with. Our lives touch other people's lives and our lives affect other people's lives, even though for instance, my life affects quite a few people's lives, even though what I do for me and the path I walk on is still my life. But I still affect a lot of people.

Barbara then brought this to a more abstract level.

Even though we're here separately, we're all in this thing together sort of like. You know what I mean? If the five of us were in jail, I'm here for a different reason and you're here for a different reason than I'm here, but those people over there in that jail cell want to harm us or whatever. Well the five of us have got to band together in order to not let that happen. That's just like the world. I think we've all got to band together or we're going to kill each other otherwise.

....I think each of us need to help people as human beings, but women really need to band together to help each other out in so many situations because men don't understand.....I just think we have to help one another.Women have got to, we've got to band together because these men they can do a number if you let 'em [laughs].

Nora. Nora strongly agreed with the statement of separateness, yet talked about how she saw that as affirming uniqueness. Nora was clear about the need to be responsible for one's own life.

True. True. One thousand percent will I agree with that. I should tattoo that on my wall. ... I do, people are individuals. I can't say that because Susan likes blue, Mark's gonna like blue. I can't say that if she be's a doctor he's gonna be a doctor. They're individuals. They live their live individually. And I always say, I always say all the time, I'm unique. And if I didn't think that I was unique then I wouldn't think that we were each individuals, right? We're individual people. We're all unique,

despite the fact that I might go to the same store or I might do the same thing, in your own way you're unique. Because there are things that you do, you do em your way... Because that's your individual, you know, your individualism. It's nothing that says you're right or I'm right but that's being individual.

When asked about how people might be connected she responded by talking about group behavior which allows people to avoid taking responsibility for themselves.

A lot of people get into that rut. I call it a rut. I mean maybe I shouldn't call it a rut, where they don't want to be, but those people don't want to take responsibility for their own lives. That's the kind of people that I see in that situation, that does not want to take responsibility for their own life. So in order for me to feel like I don't have to do that, I get with the crowd. So not I don't have to take responsibility, I was with the crowd when it happened!

Even in the context of acknowledging the need for helping people, Nora still insists on people making their own choices and accepting that responsibility.

I don't know because even though people are separate and live in their own lives, we need confirmation. We need somebody to console us. Whether or not we value it after it's done, whether or not we react upon what we get from that person, is a different story. But I don't know if that's part of our programming or not but we need that. And I like to be in that position. Even though I know when I say to you or I say to Jane or Jill or whoever I talk to, him, her, you know, go out there. Don't do this. Don't do this. This isyou take. When Joe walks away, I know he's gonna do what Joe wants to do anyway. Because he's, he's that individual and whatever makes Joe tick, Joe's gonna do it. But at least I know that at some point Joe might have to stop and realize, 'Wait a minute, Nora said if I did

it this way, maybe I'd see a whole different result from it and I'd feel a little more pleased with it.' Maybe Joe will do that. And it's not because I'm trying to make Joe be like me. But it's because when I talk to people I try to give them what I think is a good view. What I think is the right way to be.

And like I said, my way of right might not be your way of right. Because we're individuals. But if they come to me, I feel that they want, that they're concerned with what my way of right is. So I give em that. But that doesn't mean that they won't, they're just gonna go out there and say, okay, Nora said it..... and I know that. I know it. I mean if I really gave these people this advice thinking that everybody was just gonna jump right on it, then somebody should put me away.

Self-Oriented Carers

A greater sense of connection and interdependence was heard in this group. Responsibility for oneself was still a prominent theme.

Joan. The tension in Joan's life between being the "responsible adult" and the "irresponsible kid" underlies her response. In her story of connectedness, Joan focused primarily on family responsibilities but also mentioned the importance of learning from others.

That's true. But,--I tell myself that. But you know that there are other people, if you're not only, it's not only just the self, there are other people involved in it but self sometimes has to take the foreground [background] to some things because the front may be that you have this responsibility, not only for self but for others as well. So, if you're in a family situation, the self isn't necessarily the frontrunner. It may have to go to the foreground

[background]. But you try to bring the self to the front as much as you can. But you know that sometimes you have to make concessions. And the self gets buried as I make those concessions. So it would be nice to say that the self gets everything and has, it can move in any direction it chooses to move, but not necessarily.

[How do you know when you need to make concessions?]

You know when it's a benefit to someone else, when it's, depending upon the situation you're in and what benefit that other person is gonna derive from it. So, then you know that you have to make a concession on that. And, I've had to make concessions to the point that I didn't want to do it but I had to make a concession because it was for the benefit of the other individual--to help that self grow and help that self feel good about--themselves. So, concession--as a parent, you make a lot of them. And you just, the self--goes to the back.

Despite the need for compromise, Joan sees the benefit in being responsible to and connected to others.

....a lot of times I would love for the self to have everything, but the self can't have it. And, I think-- it's not even really fair to the self, either. Even if you're an individual who has no responsibility, I don't think it really fair to the self to think totally of the self. Because everybody has needs and you can grow from a lot of other people's needs and interests and desires. And if you just think totally about the self, you don't learn anything. You're not learning. You're not growing. You're not learning. And I know there are a lot of selfish people out there.

Judy. A sense of separateness and connectedness was also discussed by Judy. She recognized the need for helping and listening but emphasized being responsible for oneself, as she did in her situation of interpersonal differences.

You got to be responsible for yourself. You've got your own life to live. You can't live anyone else's life for them. And even if you take it upon yourself to do that, nobody can do that. So you've got to recognize that. So you have to live your own life. You can live your life, I don't know how to explain... You can't, maybe you can tailor the way you live your life with someone else in mind, but you cannot, I don't know. You have to be. And you have to make it so, too. You have to make sure it is so. You can't let other people put their lives on you for you to live it for them. In other words, pass the responsibility of themselves onto you. No, I reject that. I don't think so.

[So at the beginning you talked about that you felt that you were here to help and serve other people.]

Um hum.

[How does that fit with the belief that people are separate and need to lead their own lives?]

You need to lead your own life, but nobody can get by on this earth without some help somewhere along the line. Helping doesn't mean leaning. You need some support. Helping means listening. That's how you can help somebody. You can listen, you can advise them. You can't do for them. Helping isn't doing. So if people realize what helping means, or what helping is, I think they would be on the road to really helping an individual move on, and be responsible for themselves. You might be responsible for yourself, but you might need the help of somebody at the time. You need help getting over some emotional trauma, and the help isn't somebody carrying you over the threshold of emotional trauma. Helping is listening to you talking it out and point out to you some things that you can't see on your own or for yourself. And then you listen to that and you take it back into

yourself, and you put it out positively to make things better for yourself. You don't lay your life in someone else's hands for them to do with it what they will.

Jean. Jean discussed how we affect each other's lives, especially involving oppression. The theme of racism and social responsibility is carried through.

So, That's true to a certain extent. Because we lead each others' lives to a large degree. We determine each others' lives in this country and we deny people opportunities by leading our lives if we lead them in such a way that they oppress other people who need us to help them lead theirs, and we determine where they will lead theirs to a large degree. And you could say the same for our foreign politics, just leading our lives, and wreak havocleading the wrong way, in a selfish way. So that's true. That's true. Each person has to determine what's best for him or her and how they can make contributions. So that's true, and yet not true.

[Any other ways that you see the connection between each others' lives?]

In positive ways. We can make changes in other people's lives to help them lead their lives better by how we lead our lives. So it's all quite connected. It really is.

Jean's spiritual beliefs help her see people's similarity and oneness. She suggested a metaphor used by the founder of Baha'i--

.... flowers in a flowerbed. All different, and yet all the same. And that's unbelievable, that is really unbelievable when I listen to crazy people, I have to remind myself they're just like you, just slightly crazy in some ways.

Adele. Like Jean, Adele acknowledged people's connection and commonality as human beings. However, Adele primarily talked about our separateness which she interpreted to mean individuality.

Yes, indeed. There's a place for everyone. Everybody's heart beats, everybody breathes, everybody goes to the bathroom.We're all one of God's creatures.

....It's too bad that some people try to ruin and lead other peoples' lives. If only they could get out from under. Yes, we're all separate. And that's what makes the wonder of it because I don't think people realize how really wonderful they are, how individual they are, because there are so many of us. Or they're in an oppressed state. But that's all coming out. Um, there's more of a stamp on individualism now, with the kids coming along. And that's our hope. 'Cause, it's always up to the younger people. But they got more working for them now--individuals. People have to know their identity. Know who they are and they do count.'

Mutualists

These women tended to recognize both the need for personal responsibility and individuality, as well as responsibility for and interdependence with others. Their perspective of connection included a sense of mutual needs and assistance. An expectation to help others was also identified.

Toni. Toni also centered on the fact that we affect each other's lives and our responsibility to interact with others. She noted the complexity of the dynamics between personal integrity and the consideration of others.

I don't see individuals leading their own life without others being involved. I see an interaction with others and a giving and a taking, and I think that I should be me without compromising others and vice versa. Because I, everything that I do

effects someone else. Therein I cannot be that individual that I want to be. Yet I have to be true to myself and say, think and do the things that I believe. But as long as they're not hurting someone else, as long as I take into consideration how it effects others, than I can be an individual. I just don't think a person can just live their lives individually and then that's it. Even the person who lives alone, what they do effects other people in that they don't have that interaction, but they could be effecting someone else's lives in a positive way. If a person lives alone and stays by themselves and never shares cheats somebody. There's probably another lonely person out there who could use their company. I just don't think that we were meant to be alone and live our individual lives without interaction.

[Is there an image or metaphor that comes to mind that captures your perspective?]

Well the first thing that came into mind when you read that statement is "No man is an island."

Carol. Carol recognized people's separateness but basically saw the need to love, and share each other's joy and pain, and change conditions of suffering. As before, she takes a broad perspective.

I wish I agreed with that. It's true, um, when one dies their fate is set. I mean they know whether they're going to go to heaven or hell. And they're all going to be tried separately. Um, and it isn't the case that they have to count on anyone for what they're gonna. That's in the Book [Bible] and what the Book says is that they will be individuals, separate individuals.

But the difference is that while you're on earth, okay, you call them separate or whatever, you should think of them in terms of the family. If somebody is hurt, again, if somebody's feeling pain, then.....and that's not true.....individual.....willing to share in the pain. And if they get something

good that happens to them, we ought to be cheering and And so while one side of me says this is a separate individual, whatever, I don't take that tact, daily. I don't take it in my work. I don't take it in my home. I take it that we're all in the same. I take it irrespective of color, irrespective of cultural background, irrespective of economic levels, that if somebody's hurting, then I should be hurting. And I take it in the tact that if I have, and it's in my power to have to do something about it, then I should do it. I don't think of it in terms of....so that a White plight, a woman plight, uh, minority plight.

Not only does Carol believe in sharing each other's experiences, but sees the responsibility to help improve their situation.

Even though, even though when you die, you die separately. Why? Because if somebody's condition around you is one of suffering, it is your job and responsibility to make sure that the condition changes. That it gets better. Some people do it beautifully--on a group level. Some people do it on the individual level.....great things that were happening when somebody wanted to borrow a cup of sugar, or someone used I think....that kind of level. It's simplistic as one wants to think it does. And it's because we are ALL created by the same God. We are ALL, whether you want to believe it or not, part of a family in this whole cooperation. I mean the idea is to make sure that.....

[Is there any image or metaphor that could capture that perspective or philosophy?]

Love. Simply love. If you don't love, I don't know what else I can tell you. That's it. That's it in a nutshell. It just encompasses everything.

Teresa. Both the need for separateness, in terms of personal space and responsibility for one's decisions, as well as the need to be connected and involved with people was expressed by Teresa.

Because in a lot of ways, in a lot of way that you are, I mean, you still have the supports and everything but the final decision has to come from you. So yeah, I would say that that's true. But I would say that um, I would say on the other hand that, um, we need people to be in our life. We may be separate but we still need to feel that connectedness with people, with our family and with others.

Teresa sees the importance of connectedness not for survival but to be "complete." Separateness is seen in terms of having "space," not disconnection.

Well it's important for survival. I mean, we're not totally alone but we do have separate lifestyles. But it doesn't make us complete and alone. Our lifestyle should include people. My lifestyle includes my family and my friends. And, of course, at work, whomever, clients and co-workers whatever. But I think that's sort of true. I mean the separateness is true because you need that space. But I wouldn't only look at it in terms of space, not anything that's permanent. You know what I mean? Permanent separatism, I don't agree with that. But to a degree we all need space and when we do carry on with our lifestyles it should include people. Mine does.

She also speaks of an interdependence and mutuality.

Because um, people, it's important, I can't imagine not having people around me or being alone, being separate like that. It's important. You need that nurturance, the feeling of being care for and loved and being able to return it. But you still need that space.

So I can see where separate would be there but I can't see, you know, where I would feel completely alienated or alone or away from that. Cause I feel I began with my family and they'll always be my family. I'll always be connected and loving to them, or then they will, to me. And, no

matter where I go, what I do, that's a given. They're there. And then outside of my family are very, also very dear people, friends, associates, colleagues, what have you, that I need to feel connectedness with, especially in terms of growth, professional growth, so to say. And school, it's a learning experience. And through the church it's your faith. A belief experience, so I just can't, but then there's that separateness that you need away from all of that. That you spend time for yourself. Caring and loving yourself. And I like that.

The metaphor she named, however, focused on the separateness.

Live and let live. Leave me alone.

Alice. Alice first spoke about her perception of separateness, the fact that people have their own path and make their own choices in their own time. She then talked about connectedness which primarily comes from her spiritual perspective.

I believe we can offer people information and we can try to give people food for thought to make other choices in their lives. I give them a way to make choices but I also believe everybody arrives at those choices at their own rate, at their own pace. And gather any information they need at that time or can handle, and then they go on.

According to Alice, even though people are all individuals and grow in individual ways, people can have similar thoughts on issues and can join together to do things in groups or masses. In reference to ways we are connected she talked about interdependence--that there is a larger purpose for everything and that we teach each other

There's a spiritual side of me that says, yeah, that we're all connected in the spiritual sense. And that I believe that nothing happens coincidentally, that there is a reason for everything.

....Emotionally, we need people and we get what we need. If there's a need to give, we get that. If there's a need to get we get that. If there's a need to teach, you do that.Basically we're all in the process of teaching each other.

Alice added that we also have a responsibility to one another and should not live self-centered lives.

....And I also think we have an obligation to each other. I just can't live in my world.... Just so long as my little world is alright that I have no obligation. So in that sense, I guess we're all connected. We have a responsibility to each other.

Summary

1. Women's ontological orientations were consistent with their conceptualizations of self and relationships. They largely brought the same notions of connection and care to a broader context of thinking about themselves in the relation to others. Similarly, their range or scope of connection varied.

2. Their conceptions and struggles of self identity and interpersonal negotiation were reflected in their ontological perspectives. The Survivalists tended to respond in terms of separateness. The Self-Discoverers spoke of interrelatedness and need for others but highlighted respect and responsibility for individual choices. The Self-Oriented Carers tended to emphasize responsibility for oneself within the context of a greater sense of interdependence and connection. The Mutualists discussed both individuality and interdependence, and included the need for mutual assistance and to help others.

Section Four: Emergent Themes

Religion and Spirituality

Most of the women in this study spoke about religion or spirituality as an important part of their lives. For some it meant going to church or having the church as a place of support or community. For others, spirituality was a perspective and way of being in the world which helped them to live their lives.

Teresa: I got more involved in the church in the last few years. Which is important.

.... Because I needed love. I needed some religious support. I needed to be connected with, um, with people who were followers of the faith.

Toni: An of course primary above all is my family. And tied to that is my faith and my religion. We do alot of work with the church. And I think that that has been a foundation for us being able to do as much as we have done. Because speaking of things coming from within, religion or spirituality comes from within, and without that, people, I feel are just kind of dangling and loose. And we've done that with our children. Tried to instill them with something to stand on.

Jean:the most important thing for me in my life is to serve God however I can do it. If that means just staying home taking care of my babies, that's a form of service. And if I can train them to be righteous and just people, then I would have done something wonderful, especially for the Lord. Or if I chose to, whatever I chose to do, that I have follow certain law, certain moral laws which are embodied in every religion, but that's the most important thing.

Alice: My spiritual liofe is really important to me. It's probably my Number One.

Carol:I began to develop a relationship with God, Jesus Christ. And it made such a difference in me as person. I can honestly and truly tell you that outwardly I changed as well as inwardly.

....The one thing I pray for is the wisdom and knowledge of Christ the Jesus. And that wisdom sustains me.I know I can do all things with God who strengthens me.

Adele: And I talk to God a lot. And I hadn't realized that it was the hand of God that had been guiding me all this time.this lady showed me, how to work with God, how to think about, I mean God can be with us the two of us right in this room as we talk. That's what I feel now. That's what I try to convey to my clients, use your spiritualism, work with this man and He will help you, you know.

Nora: I mean my morals, my values, my ways of thinking, because everything I do sort of revolves around my spiritual aspect. I'm really spiritually inclined. It's like everything to me, it's like all good is a blessing, everything, anything happens bad has happened for a reason.there is a greater power than you and I that watches over us, that deeps us from hurt and harm and danger.

....So, that's what I'm basically into, sports and the church.

The role of the church and spirituality was interwoven into their stories of self and relationships with others. Religion and spiritual belief seemed particularly important in their process of change and personal growth.

Racial Issues

Eventhough I did not ask specifically about their experiences as Black women or with racism, many of the women brought up race-

related issues throughout the interviews. As evidenced in their quotes previously cited, being Black was an integral part of many of these women's experiences of self and relationships. Some women took the opportunity at the end of the interview when I asked, "Is there was anything else related to what we have been talking about that you want to add?" to talk about Black culture and racism. Some of the issues they raised were: the difficulty maintaining Black pride and identity in a White culture and environment; job discrimination; in-fighting among Blacks; the strong sense of family and support among Blacks; particular difficulties for Black men; anger and a sense of fight; and a sense of invisibility in a White community.

Physical Attractiveness. Of particular relevance to women's self-identity were feelings of unattractiveness and self-hatred for being Black. While the women in this study now spoke of pride in their physical appearance and identity as a Black, for some this had been a negative aspect of their sense of self earlier in their lives.

Joan: I can remember in my childhood where we had White dolls. And, I thought I wanted to be White. But as you grow older and you're still in your environment, and you're still in your culture, that goes away.

....I feel like the system has become so White oriented, I don't fit in. You know, I don't really fit in. Because I want, I like being Black. I am Black. I am who I am. And I don't want to be anything else.

Judy:I'm a dark brown person. And the shade of my skin used to earn me much ridicule, not only from Whites but from my fellow Blacks, because in the Black community, the darker you were, the lower you were.

....You couldn't be accepted because you had those awful Negroid features--broad nose, and all of that other sickstuff that they judged beauty on. So back then I didn't feel very good about myself. I felt ashamed.

....We [she and her sister] used to sit up there and fling shirts or towels around our heads, fling them like the White girls did, and that's how we felt good. We were ashamed of our kinky hair and our dark skins and things like that.

.... What's different [about herself] is that I don't feel bad about myself and about the color of my skin.I think I'm a great person, OK?What happened in the 60's I think is what made me start feeling good about myself.

Other Women as Role Models and Sources of Support

Toni:I have admiration for Black women to have dealt with this situation [taking care of children and the family] for so many years and to come through it as strong as we have.I feel real sad because women are not given that recognition in our jobs, and everyday living. I feel real sad that women are still second place. And of course that means that Afro-American women are even a step lower as far as recognition is concerned.

....I was hoping that that is one of the things that would be brought out, is the strengths of Black women. The gifts of Black women, the creativity. The experience, life experiences, more joy, more creativity, more things, they pull out of people the things that they didn't even know they had.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

In the four sections of this final chapter, the findings of this study and their significance for expanding theory and future research will be discussed. In Section One, I will review the results and discuss them in relation to previous research. Section Two will specifically focus on how issues of race pertain to these women's responses. Section Three will be a broader consideration and exploration of some the implications of this study and directions for additional investigation. Lastly, Section Four will consist of some concluding remarks.

Section One: Discussion of Results

In this section, two main areas will be addressed: a) sense of self and relationship to others, and b) developmental issues. The former will consist of a review and comparison of the main themes of these women's conceptions of self and relationships with other studies described earlier. Within the discussion of development, I will focus on perspectives and transitions, spirituality, and class differences.

Self and Relationship to Others

The women in this study were diverse, both in their backgrounds, current circumstances and perspectives. I have tried to illustrate their individuality as well as note their similarities to

each other and as a group. In doing both the interviews and the analysis, words, phrases and concerns reoccurred, even though the styles and personalities varied greatly. The fact that a couple of women's responses felt and sounded somehow different, was an indication that most of the women shared some common ways of thinking about themselves and others. The themes most salient in the responses of this group of women--defining themselves in relation to others, balancing the needs of self with the needs of others, helping and being responsive to others, and the importance of their own growth and development are issues that have also been central in previous research of women's sense of self and morality.

Even as I try to review these themes, the word "other" is an unavoidable term. How these women define themselves and what they care about, think about, struggle with involves other people and relationships. It is within this context that these women also actively seek to explore and develop their own selves.

For the women in this study, their own growth and development and the ability to make choices about their own life were of great importance. As Barbara said, "I want to be able to do all the things I want to be able to do because I'm an adult woman." Similarly, Freeman (1985) found in her study, reviewed in Chapter II, that independence, and power and control over one's own life was paramount. In both her study and mine, independence meant freedom for identity formation and self-determination, though for these women it also meant survival. This will be discussed further the next section.

This need for independence and self-defining pursuits was complicated by their care and commitment to others. The tension between responsibility to self and others, which was a central concern, has been identified as the core of moral conflicts for women in research by both Gilligan (1982) and Freeman. For women, therefore, independence, in terms of personal growth is a moral dilemma. Many of the women in this study talked about their struggle and process, whether in the past or present, to identify and develop who they were. Consistent with this study, the necessity of psychological survival ultimately determined the decisions for the women in Freeman's research, even though there were also risks to physical survival. Both Jean and Alice used the expressions, "I would have died" when explaining their decisions to pursue their own growth in their interpersonal negotiations. Self-respect and personal integrity were integral to this self-development.

The term "selfish" arose throughout the interviews as women recounted their efforts to develop and care for themselves. I think this is a telling sign of the intensity of social conditioning which has women concerned with selfishness if they chose to think about themselves. Gilligan found that as women moved from "goodness" (Level Two) to "truth" (Level Three) tension between being selfish and responsible may surface. If women are not clear about their own self-worth they may perceive their attention to their own needs as being selfish and thus see themselves thus deficient in their responsibility and care for others.

Some women in this study thought of selfishness as a negative, and were proud to say that they were not selfish. Other

women used it as a positive term or redefined it as they recognized the need to think about and act on their own behalf. Selfishness was seen as a positive and necessary way to claim and protect their own needs, time and self-care as they developed their own tenuous sense of self. This was also true in Belenky et al.'s research which found that "selfishness" was required by some women due to a weak sense of identity.

Nevertheless, consistent with Freeman, caretaking was still important and a source of pride and self-esteem. This is corroborated by Wood (1986) (reviewed in Chapter Two) who also found that when handling a crisis and making decisions in a romantic relationship, women judged themselves according to their ability to care. They were most concerned with caring for others, being responsible to themselves, and attending to the process. They strove to assert their own goals while attempting to be sensitive to the process and recognize and respond to other's needs and feelings. While this tended to be true for this group of women, their effort and ability to do that varied. Without question, responsibility to their children (and to some extent their families) was a primary consideration when making choices about their own growth. They considered how their choices would benefit themselves as well as their children.

The women in this study essentially used a care orientation in naming and dealing with their interpersonal differences and ultimately made decisions based on care for themselves. Consistent with Wood, the women were not willing to be self-sacrificing. Wood also noted that women feared investing themselves in a relationship

where they did not perceive equivalent investment from their partner. They experienced this as a threat to their selfhood. This issue was particularly evident from the women in this study in their stories of interpersonal negotiations, which most frequently involved romantic relationships with men. This concern seemed to stem not from their fear of fidelity but of receiving the support for their own sense of self and growth.

This process of interpersonal negotiation and identity development requires that women distinguish between social prescriptions and what is right for them as individuals (Freeman, 1985). This social prescription includes the attitudes and expectations of family members, workmates and lovers. As their stories have illustrated, husbands and boyfriends were a particular challenge or apparent impediment to their own growth. Several women identified situations where men (and sometimes friends and family members) expected them to act according to traditional sex roles. In fact, Toni was the only one who has been in a long term relationship with a man (in this case marriage) who named her partner and other men as consistently supportive of her growth. In situations and relationships where the other person is not also operating from a care perspective or at least a perspective of equal rights, women are left little choice but to decide based on self-care if they are to remain caring and not self-sacrificing.

The ontological perceptions expressed by this group of women also reflected a sense of connection, interrelatedness and care. Their belief in people needing to help each other and to change the world to make it more responsive to people's needs grew out of their

sense of interdependence and care, not out of principles of fairness and rights. They seemed to feel that things need to change because people hurt and people need each other to help alleviate hurt and ensure mutual survival. As in their perspective of individual relationships, individuality and personal responsibility were integrated into this orientation.

Developmental Issues

I will discuss three main issues related to development which arose from this study. One is reconsidering and expanding the developmental sequence proposed by Gilligan. Another is the inclusion of spirituality as a an influence on and reflection of development of conceptions of self and others. Third, is the role of socio-economic class in identity development.

Perspectives and Transitions. Within this similar general orientation to self and relationships, women reflected many different ways of conceptualizing their identity and the relationship between themselves and others. With the addition of one position, these perspectives corresponded to those outlined by Gilligan (1982). She contends that they depict increasingly greater differentiation of self and other, and a more complex way of understanding relationships.

As the women in this study developed a greater sense of their own identity and sense of self-worth, they insisted on increasing mutuality; the need to receive as well as give. This was not reciprocity in terms of "tit for tat" but a need to be included in the web of care. They deserved to benefit from the relation-

ship as well. The attention was not on equality in the strict sense, but on being cared for, appreciated, respected and attended to in a way that met their needs (which might not be the same as the other person's needs).

The difference from Gilligan's findings was a perspective which had a sense of interrelatedness but was also focused on the self. As noted in Chapter Two, Belenky, et al., found a similar conception. As Gilligan has described the transition out of her Level Two, women begin to recognize their own self-worth and include themselves in the web of care. However, to be an equal participant in a relationship, women must have a sense of their own identity, and recognize and feel entitled to their own needs. It seems unlikely, as this study suggests, that women can simply enter into a mutually interdependent relationship without first exploring and establishing their own sense of self.

The perspective of the Self-Oriented Carers is a step in the direction of what Belenky et. al. calls a "grounding in a secure, integrated and enduring self-concept" (p. 81). All the women to some degree referred to some recent changes in themselves in which there was an increase in their self-assertion, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-entitlement. Again, this is hardly evidence for a developmental sequence but adds support for this process. Similarly, in the retrospective accounts of the Mutualists this transition has been cited.

The style in which women become Self-Oriented Carers may certainly differ, which might include varying amounts of reactivity, anger, guilt, and self-absorption. The degree of embeddedness (to

borrow a term from Kegan, 1982) in the Level Two position and the amount of hurt or sacrifice which woman now perceive has been part their lives, may influence the strength of reaction and need for self-assertion when moving into and seeing the world from a perspective which insists on more mutuality.

I am also postulating a transitional position between the Self-Oriented Carers and the Mutualists called the Integrators. During this transition women strive to integrate this care and concern for themselves with their care and responsibility for others. They can begin to let go of some the the protectiveness and self-defensiveness that may be evident in the Self-Oriented Carers. One reason that the Self-Oriented Carers may have been the most difficult to group, is that they may be pushing in both directions on the outer limits of that perspective. Some women may be closer to the previous position, the Self-Discoverers, while others may be closer to the Integrators. In addition, there seems to be some inherent tension in the Self-Oriented Carers perspective. They are rooted in the values of caring for others and are experienced in doing so, but are also particularly concerned with themselves and their own growth. Since these two aspects have yet to be fully integrated, they can seem to be two contradictory pulls. The complexity and sometimes contradictory nature of their responses may reflect this tension and internal struggle. Table 5 outlines the perspectives I am proposing along with those of Giligan and Belenky, et al.

TABLE 5

DEVELOPMENTAL POSITIONS: GILLIGAN, BELENKY, ET AL.,
AND GOODMAN

<u>Gilligan</u>	<u>Belenky, et al.</u>	<u>Goodman</u>
1st perspective: "survival"	Silent knowers	Survivalists S (O)
2nd perspective "goodness"	Received knowers	Other-oriented carers S- <u>Q</u>
	Subjective knowers	Self-explorers (transition) S- <u>Q</u> ----- <u>S</u> -O
	Procedural knowers	Self-oriented carers <u>S</u> -O
		Integrators (transition) <u>S</u> -O ----- S-O
3rd perspective: "truth"	Constructed knowers	Mutualists S-O

Other theorists involved in studies of ego or identity development have noted a sequence which resembles a shift in focus from others to self. For example Loevinger, has the conformist then the conscientious stage. Some research has shown a high correlation between Loevingers' stages of ego development and Gilligan's positions within an ethic of care (Rogers, 1987). Kegan (1982), also has identified the interpersonal stage preceding the institutional stage, followed by the interindividual stage. The first is concerned with affiliation and organizing the self around the expectations of the other, the second is concerned with independence, autonomy, self-definition, self-system. The last involves interdependence and intimacy. He has emphasized the process of human development within the self-other relationship but does not see a relational or connected sense of self as a distinctly different world view.

His colleague, Noam (1986) proposed two general styles of being in relationship, relational and boundary. He views women's relational orientation as a personal style as opposed to a whole different perspective and way of perceiving the connection between self and other. I suggest that connected and separate may in fact be a more useful and accurate way to distinguish between these two ways of engaging in identity development. Within the constructions of separate and connected there may be more relational and boundaried styles. So people who have a more separate self-other conception could have a fairly relational style in how they interact with people. Similarly, people who generally have a more connected sense of self, may have a more boundaried personal style. However,

it seems to me that there is an important difference between world views which underlie conceptions of self, and personal styles and interests. Though other frameworks can be interesting and helpful, it is important to add that they have not given particular attention to women's perspectives and a relational sense of self.

Spirituality. Another issue in this study, given little if any attention in others theories of women's self development, is the significance of spirituality. While several women mentioned the church and religion as a important part of their lives, it was the women in Group IV and a couple from Group III who talked about spirituality as a significant aspect of how they see themselves and act in their lives. An investigation by Randour (1987) of women's spiritual experiences within a psychological framework uncovered different conceptions of self and relationships which helps shed light on these women's experiences.

The "Selves-in-Conflict," as she names them, are struggling with their self-definition in the context of their relationship and with achieving some balance in their relationship between self and God, self and other. Similarly, Nora, a Self-Discoverer, attempted to mediate her self-assertion and feelings of ambivalence by referring to her spiritual beliefs which included the need to sacrifice for others and of being spiritually rewarded for helping. Like Jean and Adele, Self-Oriented Carers, the "Emerging Selves" speak of self-definition as a spiritual process and describe a sense of sprituality as a more definitive sense of self develops. Also similar to the "Emerging Selves," the three Mutualists also

spoke of "the emergence of a stronger and more complete sense of self as a spiritual experience." (p. 38).

The Mutualists cited a spiritual experience or perspective as both a catalyst and now central aspect of their world view. They talked about spirituality as being a critical factor in their ability to accept themselves and to be more compassionate with others. Despite one's intellectual spiritual beliefs, it can be difficult to integrate them emotionally and behave accordingly. The Mutualists seemed most able to put their new consciousness into practice.

Similarly, Belenky, et al., (1986) found that constructivist women, or those who had the most integrated self-concept and were most self-reflective, were the most seriously preoccupied with moral and spiritual issues. They also "strove to translate their moral commitments into action, both out of a conviction that "one must act" and out of a feeling of responsibility to the larger community in which they live" (p. 150). Moreover, in Gilligan's Level Three, women are most concerned with the morality of non-violence--that in the end violence is destructive to all and that care enhances both self and other. Gilligan compares this with the spiritual truth of Satyagraha (1983, p.103).

It appears that ethical and spiritual concerns and ways of being may become increasingly prominent as women develop a clearer and more integrated sense of themselves and their relatedness with others. Randour and other theorists have suggested perspectives of self beyond those described here. These constructions and their implications will be explored further in the next section.

Class Differences. Another noteworthy characteristic of the Mutualists is their professional and educational status. None of these women came from privileged families, and as a group, their backgrounds are not significantly different from any of the other women. They all have graduate degrees and are working in professional positions in the field of human services. They have had the opportunity to develop their own sense of identity and explore their interests and talents. The Survivalists have some of the least education and do work to earn money as opposed to gain self-satisfaction. This raises the issue of the politics of personal growth. As Shotter (1984) has acknowledged, if development is contingent upon experiences and opportunities, and those are differentially distributed and limited, then political and economic control will determine access of some developmental opportunities. The sexist ideology that inhibits women's self-development has already been touched on. In their stories, they also described racial discrimination and constraints due to class oppression. The effects of race, sex and class clearly interact. While some women have been able to grow despite and possibly because of these challenges, other women have been limited by them.

In summary, as our understanding of women's sense of self and relationships grows, it seems important to recognize women's orientation toward caring and responsibility to others, as well as their own desire and need to gain a sense of independence and their own identity. Within this care orientation, many women may pay greater attention to their own needs and self-pursuits in order to develop their own sense of self, before feeling comfortable with

attending to both their own and other's needs. Spiritual development, and educational and occupational opportunities need to be considered as forces which impact on the development of women's sense of self and conception of relationships.

Section Two: Racial Issues

One of the purposes of this study was to explore the effect of race on women's sense of self and relationships. From the previous section, it is clear that these women have much in common with the White women (and women from other racial/ethnic backgrounds) that were part of similar research. Yet, their racial identity is not inconsequential. Many aspects of their stories were characteristic of Afro-American culture and seem to support a relational and care orientation. While the women were asked to provide some background information, much of what is discussed here was gleaned from the interviews.

Several issues have already been noted. Many of the women are involved in some kind of social service or "helping" role. Several studies of vocational interests and choices from the early 60's and 70's claim that Blacks tended to prefer occupations that were people-oriented, which was seen as an extension of their humanistic orientation of their African heritage (reviewed in Smith, 1981). However, other research (Brazziel, 1961) questions whether these in fact are real choices or simply more realistic goals. These are the fields that are traditionally open to women as well as Blacks.

In addition, the church, religion and spirituality was an important part of their lives. As other research has indicated

(Mendes, 1981; Smith, 1981) the church has historically played a major role in the lives of many Afro-American families and still seems to be a place for establishing connection. Spirituality is frequently a central component of their sense of self and being in the world. Also as mentioned earlier, the participants in this study had little future orientation; they had difficulty envisioning themselves in the future. Within African philosophy, time conceptions include past and present but no concern with the future (Nobles, 1980).

Descriptions of Afro-American culture tend to highlight family and kinship networks as a central part of Black life. Both implicitly and explicitly, the women in this study talked about the importance of their family of origin, not only their created family. Several mentioned wanting to stay relatively geographically close to members of their original families. All but two of the women grew up in fairly low income families. About half stated that they came from large families of origin consisting of five to 15 children. Several women were raised by women other than their mother or are raising children other than their own. For some of the women, their own mothers were cited as playing a significant role in the upbringing of their children. From both their families and spiritual teachings, many women were instilled with the responsibility to help others, particularly other Blacks. However, they also added that they have White friends and teach their children not be prejudiced.

Most of these factors seem to contribute to their sense of connection and interdependence, and their care orientation. For

many women in this study, their mothers and other women were a strong influence, both as sources of support and role models. They seemed to foster both a sense of care and responsibility to others as well as independence. This has been corroborated by other writings on the African American experience (Joseph and Lewis, 1980; Hooks, 1981, 1984). Great respect for their mothers and a cooperative and collaborative relationship between Black mothers and daughters in order to deal with societal conditions has been described by Joseph (in Joseph and Lewis, 1981) among others.

Some women spoke about their mothers as a primary support in their lives, helping them through difficult situations, such as depression, teenage pregnancy, family illness and racist encounters. In reference to her mother, Joan said, "She's this loving, giving person. And, a lot of it just rubbed off on me."

Their mothers and other important women were also seen as models for managing the family and handling the challenges of the White, male world. Most of their mothers worked and there never seemed to be a question that they would as well. A woman as the primary support of the family was mentioned by a few women. As Teresa talked about the strength she learned from her mother, she described times when her mother confronted unfair situations.

We grew up in an all White neighborhood. There were just a lot of other incidences that, problems that happened, where she stood up for us as she was raising us. That you couldn't help but also stand up as well.

....That's what my mother was good about. Because no matter what anyone said, she was able to, she still is able to just revoke this and redirect right back on the subject, knowing that that person

may have made a comment because she was a woman, or perhaps because she was Black. And she did it intellectually.

I mean there are many ways one can respond back. And a lot of times when a person has low self esteem they sort of bounce back in defense all the time. My mother wasn't like that.if she heard something or something had been said, she'd take another example and it would get that person to see through that example how stupid they looked through what they were saying.

....She played the game very well. And that's how it was instilled in me at a young age. Because it was survival, you know?

Often with their mothers and other women as role models, several women in the study described themselves as independent and strong. As suggested by Teresa, these women's sense of independence seems to grow out of survival issues. Even though they spoke about the connection and support from their families, their sense of themselves in the world seemed to convey a need to make it on their own.

In Freeman's research (1985), women talked about independence as the freedom to develop their identity and make choices for themselves. The way the women in this study talked about their independence carried with it a greater sense of determination. It was a matter of survival. Especially in light of these women's experiences with racism, unsupportive romantic relationships, early pregnancies, single parent families, and friends and family members involved with alcohol and drugs, many women have learned to take care of themselves and get what they need without necessarily depending on someone else. For example, as Judy said,

I'm very independent.... I believe I can take care of myself. I don't need any body to take care of me. The only thing anybody else can do is make it easier for me to take care of myself. And if they can't do that, then I don't have any need for them.

Alice also stated, "No one is gonna give it to me. I have to go get it."

Their experiences as a Black woman affected their sense of self and relationships in other ways that were also apparent from their responses. In Chapter Four, women's need to be protective of themselves, in part due to the experiences with racism, was cited. A few women also talked about anger and "sense of fight" that they saw as a result of being Black in this culture and living in areas with racial tension. Nora explained,

When I was younger....I was like the typical Black person, you know. I had a lot of fight in me. There was a lot of anger in me.You could walk down the street and brush up against me as you passed by and there could be six people walking on the curb and I would be ready to fight.

At age 12 she almost killed somebody and then "woke up." She could not reconcile this behavior with her spiritual beliefs and her desire to help people.

How do you ever expect to be in a position in life where you're helping people that needs help and then you turn around and the same person that you help, you just hurt them again?

Some women also talked about their struggle to feel physically attractive, and to develop self-esteem and a positive self-identity as a Black person. Over half the women also referred to looking on

the positive side and trying to find the best in each situation. I heard a real sense of optimism, hopefulness and survival. From the women who did not express this sentiment, it was also noticeable. In almost all the interviews there were stories of racism, personal traumas, painful experiences and other significant challenges. Yet what stood out was their philosophy and decision to look for the good and at the positive side of situations and life. They made comments such as,

Toni:I think I have an opportunity when I have a negative situation to turn it around to the positive. Every negative situation is an opportunity for a person to turn it around, learn from it, and see something positive.

Adele: Sometimes when I feel kinda down, I can look around and see just how fortunate I am, compared with other people.

Nora: I basically just try not to reflect upon the negative aspectsso I try to remain optimistic. I'm optimistic about everything.

Judy: Things could be worse. You have to look around and be thankful, find things to be thankful for. I'm thankful I've got this vase, because there are people who don't even own a vase. Don't even have a roof over their head where they could put a vase.

Joan: I keep looking at the positive side. I don't work on that negative side. I just say, 'These are things that I have and these are things that I need to work on.'Eventhough I may have some bad things, but these good things outweigh the bad things.

Again, these qualities of self-acceptance and looking on the bright side not only seem to be part of a process of human development but of survival. Several women talked about other Blacks (with varying amounts of compassion and blame), sometimes in contrast to themselves, who gave up, accepted their oppression, are bitter, and turned to drugs and alcohol. These women have chosen a different path. As Joan described,

I refuse to let anyone keep me down--man, woman, child, anybody, mother, sister, brother--I don't let them do that to me. So I walk around, with my head up like I know where I am and where I'm going. And I may not even know where I'm going.

A few women specifically mentioned the particular hardships for Black men, which may have bearing on these women's male/female relationships. Again, while their struggles in their relationships with men for support for their own needs, interests and pursuits sounds similar to many women's stories in a sexist culture, race appears to add a level of complexity. White society has traditionally targeted Black men; Black women have been socialized to have concern for Black males and to be independent (Joseph and Lewis, 1981; Hooks, 1984). Many Black women feel that they must continue to take a supportive and submissive role in relation to Black men who have been badly scarred by racism (Hare and Hare, 1970). The need to bond with Black men around racism, as well as be independent in order to provide for themselves, their family and community, makes Black women's process of self-development additionally complicated.

It is impossible to know exactly which factors play what role in the conception of self and the connection between self and other. The complexity of self-identity and relationships is enormous. Simplistically, from the perspective of race, it seems that as Afro-Americans they bring a sense of interrelatedness and connection, which has roots in their African heritage, spirituality and family network. The concern for survival and growth in a racist society seems to promote a sense of independence and self-sufficiency. Mothers and other women as role models, and positive attitudes were important to their sense of self and survival. In general, one's access to social power has been considered a key aspect to one's self and self-other constructions (Freeman, 1985; Lykes, 1985; Harding, 1986; Sampson, 1988). This will be taken up in the next section.

Section Three: Theoretical and Research Implications

In Sections One and Two of this chapter, I discussed the findings of the study and issues that were germane to understanding these women's responses or would shed light on their perspectives. In this section, I will offer considerations related to this study and this field of research. My intent is to raise issues, point to other's work and make connections with the hope that this will contribute to the expansion of our thinking about women, human development, and morality. The main topics areas addressed include development beyond the already proposed positions, reconsiderations of self, morality and ontological perspectives and their societal implications, and questions of culture in theory and research methods.

Full-Spectrum Development: Beyond "Level Three"

In the first section of this chapter, two main issues of development were discussed. One was the postulation of a position of greater focus on self and definition of identity between Level Two and Three within the development of an ethic of care. The second was the emphasis and centrality of moral and spiritual concerns for the women in Group IV. I would now like to extend this discussion to consider development beyond Level Three or the women in Group IV.

This and other studies concerned with self and identity are essentially concerned with ego development and identify similar to basic self and self-other structural changes as part of this development. (For example, this was seen in the correlation of Gilligan's work with Loevinger's research on ego development mentioned earlier). Once one has achieved a "strong, mature, well-differentiated psyche and well integrated self-structure" (Wilber, 1986, p. 12) and the ability to have mutual, interdependent caring relationships, what next? Does development just end? I think not, and research both in the areas of self and morality point in directions of transpersonal and spiritual realms.

First, I will address self and identity development. Efforts are being made to build on conventional perspectives of development to include the transpersonal, or "the extension of identity beyond both individuality and personality" (Walsh and Vaughn, 1980, p. 16). Both conventional stages of psychological growth and the "higher" levels of spiritual development are being examined as the possibilities of

human development are being explored (Cf.: Walsh and Vaughn, 1980; Vaughn, 1985; Wilber, Engler and Brown, 1986). As feminist researchers have shown, there is a masculine bias in many theories of human development. At this point, it is not my intention to critique the possible androcentrism (and other limitations) of these theories of transpersonal development, but to consider how they can be useful in helping to expand on models of human development which are based on or inclusive of women's experiences.

Investigations of self-transcendence have arisen as people have begun to realize the limitations of the upper reaches of psychological development. Maslow (1968), a pioneer in humanistic psychology, had initially outlined a hierarchy of needs in the process of self-development, ranging from safety, belongingness, and self-esteem, to self-actualization. These appear to have some correspondence to the different central needs of the women in this study. He then proposed a need beyond self-actualization, self-transcendence. "I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology, to be transitional, a preparation for a still higher Fourth psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity and self-actualization and the like" (1968, p. 51). Maslow equates these "highest" values, the highest aspirations of humankind, with spiritual life. Carl Jung also suggested that the first half of life should be focused on external accomplishments and the development of ego, while the second half should be concerned with the inward journey and letting go of ego (Vaughn, 1985).

In expanding the notion of identity beyond ego, Engler (1986) attempts to integrate object relations and Buddhist psychology to create a model of full-spectrum development. He aptly states that you have to be somebody before you can be nobody. The tasks of identity formation, or "finding out who I am, what my capabilities are, what my needs are, what my responsibilities are, how I am related to other selves and what I should or could do with my life" are necessary before one can transcend the self (p. 29-30). A cohesive and integrated sense of self is the goal of ego psychology or conventional development but the beginning of contemplative or transpersonal psychology.

Vaughn (1985) describes the process of human development as a search for wholeness. Each person is a part of a wholeness that constitutes the fabric of the universe; the totality is also contained within each person. Within this whole, each person may experience her/himself as an independent, separate self developing towards intrinsic wholeness as well as towards the recognition of their relationship to the larger whole.

Drawing on work by Wilbur (1980), which concurs with Engler, Vaughn describes the process of full cycle development in which the outward arc of personal egoic development precedes the inward arc of transpersonal spiritual development. The self evolves through stages of identity with various self-concepts that tend to become increasingly expanded and inclusive. At each stage there is the process of differentiation, transcendence and integration. However, inner development can be experienced at any age and there does not have to be a choice between devoting oneself exclusively to outer or

inner development. Vaughn sees psychology and spirituality as complementary and interdependent aspects of healing and the journey to wholeness.

An ethic of care, as a theory of identity or ego development, needs to consider the transpersonal. As an ethical/moral theory, it needs to consider the spiritual domain. I have been struck by the similarity of the basic components of a morality of care with basic spiritual principles--caring for oneself and others, empathy, interdependence, connectedness, compassion, non-violence and love. Gilligan herself used the terms "psychology of love" (1984) and "vision of love" (1986b) to talk about an ethic of care. Ruddick (1987) as well, prefers the term "morality of love" rather than "care." Kohlberg also added a possible seventh stage, Universal-Spiritual to his theory of moral development (Wilber, 1980).

The exploration of transpersonal and spiritual dimensions of both human and moral development seem to be new and needed frontiers. As theories include "the farther reaches of human nature" (Maslow, 1971), it is essential that women's perspectives and relational orientations are included. Feminist psychology and spirituality have already made inroads in this direction.

Revisiting Conceptions of Self, Ontologies, and Moralities and their Social/Political Implications

The work of Carol Gilligan has promoted discussion in the psychological community of conceptions of self and others, moral orientations and world views. Yet, these issues are not limited to the psychological domain and have far reaching implications and consequences. Women's sense of self and moral orientation have

both sparked and added to alternative ways of constructing reality. I will briefly discuss some of the challenges to the traditional Western ontology and the societal implications of alternative ontologies and moralities.

Psychologies of Individualism and Moral Orientations. The ontological foundations of individuality have been a focus of debate as social/historical conditions have changed and theorists, feminists included, have challenged the notion of the unity and autonomy of individuals (Heller and Wellbery, 1986). Critical of this conception, Sampson (1977, 1985, 1988) has been participant in this dialogue.

In his recent article (1988), he describes two distinctive and contrasting frameworks for defining individualism, "each which introduces different consequences for personal, interpersonal and societal functioning" (p. 15). According to Sampson, psychologies of individualism "fundamentally involve the form of person-other relationships, where "other" includes other persons, society in general and even nature" (p. 15).

"Self-contained individualism" is characterized by firmly drawn self-other boundaries, an emphasis on personal control and the conception of person/self as exclusionary. "Ensembled individualism" emphasizes more fluidly drawn self/non-self boundaries, field control and the conception of person/self that is inclusive. Self-contained individualism is the dominant cultural and psychological type in the United States. He cites cross-cultural, historical and intra-cultural evidence to support the notion of ensembled individuality.

As part of the intra-cultural evidence, he notes feminist research, particularly the work of Gilligan and Lykes (whose work was reviewed in Chapter Two). The emphasis on connections and relationships rather than boundaries and separations, which Gilligan found, and Lykes' description of social individuality, support ensembled individualism as an indigenous psychology.

Sampson goes on to claim that the core cultural ideals of freedom, responsibility and achievement can be best attained, and in a more lasting manner, by ensembled individualism rather than self-contained individualism. These are not two opposing tendencies that can balance each other, but two contrasting, incommensurate ideologies and systems of belief and understanding. He sees the task as affirming the ensembled form of individualism and promoting the kinds of social structures and arrangements which support its existence.

As Sampson suggests by citing Gilligan's research, questions of ontology underlie different moral positions and self-definitions. While Gilligan and Sampson take different starting points--Gilligan, moral reasoning and Sampson psychologies of individualism, both are concerned with conceptions of self and the connection between self and other. Considering both their theories, questions are raised about the relationship between care and justice moral orientations and their related assumptions about self and others, as well as the adequacy of an ethic of care as a comprehensive moral theory.

Gilligan contends that there are two distinct but intersecting paths of moral reasoning which have different assumptions about self and the connection between self and other (1983). The basic

assumptions of a justice framework include the division between self and other and the logic of reciprocity or equal respect. This is similar to self-contained individualism. From the perspective of care, self and other are interdependent; moral action is viewed as responsive, arising in relationship. Therefore, the self by definition is connected to others. This is akin to ensembled individualism.

The relationship between care and justice reasoning to each other as well as to psychologies of individualism is still unclear. If one equates Sampson's ensembled individualism with an ethic of care and self-contained individualism with an ethic of justice, Sampson contends that a care orientation is preferable. Like Sampson, Gilligan purports that the terms of one perspective do not contain terms of the other and that they are different ways of organizing the basic elements of moral judgements--self, others and the relationship between them. However, unlike Sampson, Gilligan has maintained that care and justice are two equally adequate but distinct moral orientations.

She has suggested the moral domain is comprised of at least two, moral orientations and that different sets of ethics and types moral reasoning best address different problems. The confusion of these two orientations leads to confusion and difficulty with choice. "This confusion is apparent when problems of relationships are cast in the language of 'rights'....and conversely, when conflicts of rights are construed in the language of responsibility so that opposing claims are formulated as a "balance of selfishness," then no resolution can be seen as moral, and integrity of autonomous choice appears uncaring and selfish, a manifestation of indifference"

(1983, p. 48). Relationships of equality rely on the logic or justice while relationships of interdependence rely on an ethic of care.

In this study, the case where a woman used primarily justice reasoning was when confronted by an unjust situation of unequal power; Teresa was denied access to a class because she was Black. In another situation of inequality, Joan was less concerned about hurting her supervisor at work because of the context and his role. It would be interesting to see how other women would address situations that were not focused on personal relationships, and whether they would tend to use more justice reasoning.

Gilligan further sees the inability to utilize or consider both orientations as a liability (1987). Since people tend to focus on one way of defining and resolving moral conflict they may have the tendency to lose sight of one moral perspective in arriving at moral decisions. While she encourages the explication and inclusion of a morality of care, she sees it as a complementary way of addressing moral issues. However, Sampson has proposed that the framework of ensembled individualism should be affirmed and fostered in our culture as an alternative to self-contained individualism. "The task, therefore, is not to leaven self-contained individualism with the emsembled alternative: This makes absolutely no sense" (p. 21). Next I would like to address more specifically, how an orientation of care can be increasingly incorporated into our society and what that would look like.

Social/Political Implications. According to Gillilgan, the two moral orientations are appropriate for different contexts; justice for relationships of equality (or inequality, I would add) and care for

relationships of interdependence. Certainly, living in this society, which is based on principles of rights and fairness, it behooves women who are care oriented to learn and understand this justice reasoning. Yet, this can easily lend itself to the argument that caring only belongs in the private domain and justice in the public domain. And because women tend to be care oriented, this argument can be used to reinforce women's traditional roles and the position that women belong in the home (as some critics of Gilligan have interpreted or feared). Based on her responses to interpretations and critics who see discussing women's relational and care orientation as implying that they are not suited for the public world (See Kerber, et al., 1983), I would doubt that this is her position. She has alluded to the need for both moralities to play a part in "public as well as private life" (1986). Yet, there is little elaboration on how and why a ethic of care gets integrated or somehow joined with an ethic of justice.

I find most compelling the theorists who are attempting to explicate a theory of care and demonstrate its use and appropriateness in all spheres of our society. I am not convinced that there necessarily needs to be a morality of justice if there was a fully developed and accepted ethic of care. However, in our current situation where justice predominates, it certainly is useful to have access to both types of reasoning. Cross-cultural studies would undoubtedly be useful in envisioning relational, care based or non-justice oriented moralities and world views.

Tronto (1987) insists that if an ethic of care is to be taken seriously as a moral position, then a full theory of care needs to be

constructed. Its assumptions must be explored and the full social, political and philosophical context must be specified. She does not assume that care is only a supplementary moral theory but an alternative one. As the title of her article suggests, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care," besides debating from where the difference arises, attention needs to be turned to further defining and articulating an ethic of care. Many theorists have taken up this challenge (Cf. Kittay and Meyers, 1987).

A theoretical philosophical discussion of an ethics based on natural caring is provided by Noddings (1984). It is based on the feminine, in the classical sense--rooted in relatedness, receptivity and responsiveness.

Noddings assumes a fundamental relatedness, and dependence upon each other. Individuality is defined in a set of relations. Caring, is the natural and innate impulse to act on behalf of the other. The desire to act morally, is derived from the fundamental and natural desire to be and remain related.

She rejects the notion of universalizability and principles and rules to guide ethical behavior; she calls for the process of concretization and empathy as opposed to abstraction and objectivity. Yet, the ethical ideal has at its heart a universal component, the maintenance of the caring relation.

Particularly important considering women's struggles, is that it is essential to include oneself in caring. Noddings maintains that since we are defined in relation we can not sacrifice ourself when we move toward the other as one-caring. Caring is both self-serving

and other serving. If caring is to be maintained, then the one-caring must be maintained.

People need to acquire and practice skills in caring. Girls usually get more practice than boys which may account for some of the gender differences. Noddings suggests that men need to learn how to care and women need to learn how to maintain themselves as ones-caring through strengthening their self-image. Women should remain in touch with their deep feminine structures and bring their strength into the public world of work. Efforts need to be directed toward the maintenance of the conditions that will allow caring to flourish. She elaborates a vision and model of moral education based on the ethics of care.

The politically productive possibilities implicit in Gilligan's research are more specifically explored by Katzenstein and Laitin (1987). Caring and responsibility have formed the focal point of feminist politics which also holds that private and public spheres should not be separated. They contend that mutual caring and responsibility in the private domain requires the use of political power in the public arena. Furthermore, the values of care and responsibility learned in the personal realm and family life, have to be transported into the public realm of authority. They cite two different political contexts to illustrate the manifestations of moralities of caring in political life--suffragists at the turn of the century and the present day anti-pornography movement.

They acknowledge that claims based on gender or culture-based differences can be reactionary or progressive. Moral differences, based on the importance of family and personal ties

can reinforce rather than challenge existing systems of gender stratification. I assume that as long as an orientation toward relationships and caring are seen as a primarily female activity and as only part of the private sphere, then a reactionary response is more likely to occur. It will more likely be progressive if these concerns are seen as a comprehensive moral orientation which is available to and beneficial to both men and women, as Noddings has suggested.

Cultural Considerations

As issues of culture become increasingly part of the thinking and research methods of human development, questions are raised. In the following discussion I will address three aspects which grow out of this research: how to account for different conceptions of self and ontologies, racial and gender identity in relation to self-development, and implications for doing cross-cultural and feminist research.

Accounting for a "Different Voice." There is ongoing debate about why women tend to have a more relational and care orientation. This difference is attributed to a range of factors including biology, psychology, socialization, history and social conditions, and different combinations of them. While I am not about to answer this question, I would like to consider social and cultural factors which may influence these perspectives and frameworks. It is potentially dangerous, and in fact, inaccurate based on the research, to assume that these differences in conceptions of self and others are gender-specific or determined.

Gilligan's work has been criticized for its lack of social and historical context when describing women's different voice (Kerber, 1986; Stack, 1986; Auerbach, et al. 1985). Moreover, since this study was concerned with race and ethnicity, these aspects should not be overlooked.

As described previously (Harding, 1987; Tronto, 1987), there is a similarity between an African and feminine world view, and a European and masculine world view. Because of this "curious coincidence" (Harding, 1987), just gender can not account for the two different ontologies and moralities; other factors must outweigh biologically differing experiences. In addition to the feminist object relations argument (put forth by Chodorow), she suggests that different world views and cognitive styles may result from participation in different kinds of social activities. Harding attributes the parallels in feminine and African world views to the experience of oppression and states that a justice perspective appears to be an ideology of a dominant class rather than a universal truth. She proposes a unified field theory which could account for gender difference within a larger context that includes other structures of oppression and exploitation.

Other feminist theorist, such as Freeman (1985), Lykes (1985), and Wood (1986) reviewed earlier, have also cited the importance of social context and relationship to social power in explaining the differences in conceptions of self and morality. Women and groups with relatively less social power and security will be more likely

to need to rely on connections and relationships. Lykes found evidence for this related to socio-economic class and Stack (1974) with poor Blacks.

Racial and Gender Identity. As noted by Freeman (1985) and as evident in this study, women who choose to be "independent" and pursue their own identity and self-development are acting outside the social ideology and challenging traditional sex role norms. Even though there may be some differences between the sex role expectations of White and Black women, there appears to be enough similarity to suggest that female socialization encourages women to subordinate her needs and pursuits to other's, especially her male partner and family. It seems therefore, that a process of gender identity development or process in change of consciousness about what is appropriate for women is necessary for the development of a sense of self and identity.

A similar process may be required around race, even though the sexist social ideology of being the caretaker of others may more directly inhibit women's personal growth. Several women spoke about their need to come to terms with their Black identity before they could accept themselves. I wonder whether it is possible to have a well-differentiated sense of self and mutual, interdependent relationships if one considers oneself somehow inferior or less than. Identity development models for people in oppressed cultural groups have been outlined a process of developing a positive identity as a member of that group (i.e., Jackson, 1976 for Blacks; Kim 1981, for Asian-Americans; Kandel, 1986 for Jews). In addition, these stages of the development seem to parallel positions within the

development of a sense of self. Future research could explore whether social group identity development may be necessary though not sufficient for, as well as its relationship to, the process of ego or self development.

Research Implications. As I have already acknowledged in Section Two on racial issues, it is impossible to examine and attribute perspectives to only one set of social experiences or identities. This raises questions of how to consider multiple and complex processes and effects due to different social identities. Even though this study of Black women found similar constructions of self and relationships with those of White women, the consideration of race added an important dimension of understanding. For example, there were commonalities in a sense of independence and sex role dynamics that seem related to their experiences as women and with sexism, yet the added emphasis on survival and their particular relationship with Black men due to racism is critical to appreciating their ways of conceptualizing and being in the world.

Research methods are needed that go beyond just addressing the parallels between social oppression, such as racism and sexism, or their independent influence on people's lives; they need to consider their interactive effects. And certainly, more research needs to be done which includes and investigates the experiences of women from various social groups and backgrounds.

As discussed in Chapter Three on methodology, a qualitative approach was chosen to be consistent with the content and values of doing feminist research. In developing this study, I grappled with

issues of power dynamics, trust, rapport, and honesty. During the analysis I again struggled with concerns of bias, integrity, empowerment, and exploitation. Yet, the research interview, while probably the most exciting part of this study, also raised some concerns that were less anticipated and have implications for doing qualitative research. These involved the balance between neutrality and personal connection. I will elaborate on two main points--the problems with traditional approaches to interviewing and cultural communication styles.

Some of my discomfort has been addressed by others concerned with the politics of interviewing. As the title of her article conveys "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms," Oakley cites the general contradictions in a feminist interviewing women according to traditional interview models (and especially in her longitudinal study about childbirth). She summarizes this approach by stating,

The paradigm of the social research interview prompted in the methodology textbooks does, then, emphasize (a) its status as a mechanical instrument of data-collection; (b) its function as a specialised form of conversation in which one person asks the questions and another gives the answers; (c) its characterisation of interviewees as essentially passive individuals, and (d) its reduction of interviewers to a question asking and rapport-promoting role. (p. 36-37)

She notes the masculinity of "proper" interviewing due to its appeal to values of objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and "science," which takes priority over people and more individualized concerns. There is supposed to be the balance between the warmth required to

generate "rapport" and the detachment necessary to see the interviewee as an object under surveillance.

A similar perspective is shared by Mischler (1986). He notes the distinction between everyday relationships and the requirements of an interview. The former is governed by social norms that depend on trust, mutuality, and openness to the potential for intimacy that comes with shared disclosure of beliefs and values. Standard interviews are more asymmetric and hierarchical. Interviewers initiate topics, direct the flow of talk, decide when a response is adequate and only interviewees disclose their views. To establish and maintain rapport in this special situation, interviewers must rely on what may be called "mock" representation of the qualities of ordinary relationships. Moreover, the gap between asking and answering in naturally occurring, contextually grounded conversations and the question-response process in standard interviews may also affect the validity of the data.

When "conducting" the interviews, I had no intention or presumption of being "detached," "neutral" and "objective." Yet, I was concerned about reinforcing certain kinds of responses and inhibiting their discussion of other areas. I wanted to convey my respect for their way of making meaning in their lives, whether or not it agreed with mine. It was also difficult to decide what to further probe and explore; how to decide what was "relevant" and what was "merely interesting." This is especially difficult when doing interviews where one is trying to generate grounded theory and there are cultural differences.

In order for me to be authentic and establish a genuine and more mutual connection with the women, I had to express some of myself. I did this verbally by talking a little about myself and my work before the interview and answering their question about myself and sharing other information after the interview. In fact, at the end of the interview, one woman asked me how I would describe myself, and I answered her forthrightly. During the interviews I also communicated through less verbal behavior such as laughter, smiles, teary eyes, eye contact, "uh huhs" and sometimes an off-hand remark or response. As opposed to feeling that these were "inappropriate" and "unscientific" I felt inclined to have more emotional, verbal and physical exchange. I felt this might enhance, rather than detract from the research relationship and process.

I attribute this not only to doing feminist research with women, but to cultural styles, both mine as a Jew and theirs as Blacks. They often spoke with animation and emotion. What particularly alerted me to further consider cultural differences was the frequency with which some women said, "you know what I mean" or would reach over and touch me. I knew at these times I was actively (and I thought clearly) attentive and involved in their stories. But somehow this was not sufficient. As a Black woman friend of mine says, when she speaks to individuals or groups she needs an "Amen corner" or people with active body language who nod their heads and respond so she knows that she is being heard. Research on communication styles has suggested that Black culture has a greater freedom of expression and assertion than White

(middle class) culture and a greater reliance on non-verbal communication (Kochman, 1981).

In order to establish and maintain relationship and rapport as well as gain meaningful information, cultural as well as other power dynamics need to be considered. Oakley contends that the mythology of "hygienic research" which mystifies the researcher and researched as objective instruments of data production needs to be replaced by the recognition that "personal involvement is more than dangerous bias--it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives" (p. 58).

In summary, the discussions in this section have covered a lot of ground, which I believe speaks to the significance and heuristic value of feminist investigations of women's psychology. This research has theoretical implications for the development of transpersonal models of relational development; greater elaboration of the reasons for and relationship between different psychologies of self, ontology and morality; and feminist and cross-cultural qualitative research. Social and political realms also have to gain from further considering and including a care orientation.

Review of Specific Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the previous discussions in the last three sections, I suggest further investigation of the following areas:

1. Developmental sequences of self-identity within a care orientation, specifically of a possible position between Level Two and Level Three, and development beyond Level Three.

2. Investigation of the relationship between conceptions of self, self and others, morality and ontology.
3. The relationship between ego or self development and social identity development (i.e., gender, race).
4. Inclusion of people from other cultural groups and backgrounds to broaden the perspective on women's psychology and human development in general.
5. Research methodologies which promote greater interviewer and interviewee equality and empowerment, are culturally sensitive and appropriate, and which simultaneously consider context and the effect of multiple social group identities.

Section Four: Conclusion

This study provides further support for the fact that, as a group, women are speaking in a different voice. It also highlights the diversity among women, even from similar racial/ethnic backgrounds. Eventhough the perspectives and themes from these women resonate with those of women in other studies, their individual and social experiences significantly contribute to how they conceive of themselves, others and their process of change.

The women in this study have echoed the values of care, connection and interdependence. In our current situation of social and political crisis, alternative ways of thinking and being need to be heard. As we see ourselves separate from nature, we allow environmental destruction. As we see ourselves separate from each other, we allow violence and oppression.

New worldviews which recognize our fundamental connectedness are showing up in our scientific frameworks, and theories and methodologies across disciplines. There is the "feminization of America" (Lenz and Myerhoff, 1985) in which our public and private lives are being changed by the recognition and incorporation of women's values. It is becoming increasingly evident that the traditional "masculine" paradigms and values that have assumed autonomy, objectivity and separateness are fully accurate and viable.

In reference to "generative theory," Gergen (1982) described its ability to have individuals learn from alternative ways of thinking and acting as a form of empowerment. The inclusion of women and listening to their voices is one way of developing other perspectives--listening to people from other cultures is another. Oppression or in this case, racism, inhibits not only personal growth, but the learning and appreciation of different ways being and experiencing the world.

At the end of the interview a few women expressed things that they hoped would be conveyed through this research. In closing, I am pleased to share these with you.

Toni:I have admiration for Black women to have dealt with this situation [taking care of children and the family] for so many years and to come through it as strong as we have.I feel real sad because women are not given that recognition in our jobs, and everyday living. I feel real sad that women are still second place. And of course that means that Afro-American women are even a step lower as far as recognition is concerned.

....I was hoping that that is one of the things that would be brought out, is the strengths of Black women. The gifts of Black women, the creativity. The experience, life experiences, more joy, more creativity, more things, they pull out of people the things that they didn't even know they had.

Judy: I see what's happening to us, what's happening to our males and I grieve inside. I get angry again, and there's nothing I can do about it. Nothing I can do about it. And the way our minds have been destroyed and our culture has been destroyed and stripped and stepped on.

Yeah, I feel bad about myself. And then that rekindles those hatreds again. The task is how to function in this society. How to duck and dodge and get around it and still make it through if you can. And that's a constant struggle. And I feel bad about that we have to do this, that we have to struggle this way. Yeah, I feel very bad about that, because I don't know what to do about it. Then when individual incidences happen to me in my movement about in this society, I feel bad because there's nothing I can do about it. That nobody wants to do anything about it, because I'm relegated in their minds to nothingness, so we're not worth doing anything about it. I feel bad about that. I don't have, we don't have no place to call ours. I feel like a squatter. I feel like a squatter.

I feel bad that I don't know, I don't know how my relatives are. I feel very bad about that, and I hate it when I hear some European proudly claim that "I traced my family back to 1794." And they know the whole history of their family. I hate that. I hate that. I think that's one thing they should always be quiet about. Shut up. If you know who your great-grandmother is and your grandfather, where they came from, shut up about it. I don't want to hear it. [long pause]

I feel bad about so many of us feeling so apathetic with what our options are in this society. How we're able to move about and get, don't have

anything to look forward to. And I feel badly about so many of us taking the easy way out, doing things on the seamier side of life, the seedy side of life in order to make it. Because it's too hurtful and such a hard job to go out here. Everybody's not strong enough to go out here and box their way through society. Box their way into a job. You get tired of fighting all the time. And I feel bad about that, that we have to keep fighting all the time. Fighting, fighting, fighting. God damn, geez. I feel bad that I don't know, and I can't find what will make people move out the way from in front of the door and let us in. And I feel bad about those things.

So those kinds of things I try to put to the side, because if I keep them in the forefront, I'm not going to make any progress. I feel bad about the only way I can make progress is to keep boxing gloves on all the time. I'm tired of doing that. Jesus! And I just can't box out of the way the thing that is keeping me back. Is how other people perceive me, based on one thing. I can't box that out of the way, so help me I can't. And I feel bad about that. I feel bad about the fact that I can't reach out some great big goggly arms and gather all of us who are similar together, and make one big fist and just knock it all down, so that we could be free like everybody else. So that we can enjoy the things that everybody else enjoys. That we're constantly under this pressure. I feel bad about that.

It's a real struggle, and I'm talking about it so freely to you in hopes, in wishing that you could take this and place it on the wind and carry it all over, and everybody could hear it and understand it, and say 'Wow, take the boxing gloves off. There's no need to fight now.'

I hope this study contributes to an understanding, appreciation and respect so that the boxing gloves can be removed and hands can be joined.

APPENDIX A

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

I. My name is Diane Goodman and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. For my dissertation I am conducting research about Afro-American women. The major purpose of this study is to describe how Black women think about themselves and their lives. Research in this area has focused primarily on White, middle class women. I would like Black women's voices to be heard as well. I will be interviewing between 12 and 15 Afro-American women from various backgrounds.

II. I am asking you to be a participant in this study. I will conduct one in-depth interview with you lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes, at a time and place of your convenience. The interview will be audio-taped and complete transcripts will be made. After the interview you will be asked to complete a questionnaire of personal background information. All information, from the interview and questionnaire, is kept confidential. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time.

III. The materials from your interview will be used primarily for my dissertation but may also be used in presentations for graduate school classes, professional conferences, and written publications. In all written materials and oral presentations,

pseudonyms will be substituted for names of persons, schools, workplaces, cities and towns.

IV. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interviews as indicated in Section III. You may withdraw your consent to have excerpts from your interviews used in any printed materials or oral presentations at any time. If the materials from your interviews are to be used in any way not consistent with what is stated in section III, you will be contacted for additional written consent.

V. In signing this form you are assuring me that you will make no financial claims on me for the use of the material in your interview. Although there is no risk of physical, emotional, or mental injury from participating in this interview, the University guidelines specify that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from participating in this project.

I, _____, have read this statement carefully and thoroughly and agree to participate as an interviewee under all the conditions stated above.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of interviewer

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please write in or check off the appropriate response. All information is confidential. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number: Day _____ Evening _____

Date of Birth _____

Primary Place(s) of Growing Up _____

Religion _____

Occupation _____

Education _____ Some high school

_____ Completed high school

_____ Some college or skill training

_____ Completed college

_____ Some graduate work

_____ Completed graduate work

Degree _____

Income Range _____ Less than \$10,000

_____ 10,000 to 19, 999

_____ 20, 000 to 29, 999

_____ 30, 000 to 49,999

_____ 50,000 or above

Relationship Status ☐ Single
 ☐ Living with Partner
 ☐ Married
 ☐ Separated/Divorced
 ☐ Widowed
 ☐ Remarried

Number of Children

Ages

Mother's Race

Father's Race

Mother's Primary Place of Growing
Up

Father's Primary Place of Growing
up

Mother's Occupation

Father's Occupation

Thanks very much!

APPENDIX C

LYONS' SELF-DESCRIPTION CODING SCHEME

- I. General and Factual
 - A. General factual
 - B. Physical factual
 - C. Identifying characteristics
 - D. Identifying possessions
 - E. Social status

- II. Abilities and Agency
 - A. General ability
 - B. Agency
 - C. Physical abilities
 - D. Intellectual abilities

- III. Psychological
 - A. Interests (likes/dislikes)
 - B. Traits/dispositions
 - C. Beliefs, values
 - D. Preoccupations

IV. Relational Component

A. Connected in relation to others:

1. Have relationships: (relationships are there)
2. Abilities in relationships: (make, sustain; to care, to do things for others)
3. Traits/dispositions in relationships: (help others)
4. Concern: for the good of another in *their* terms
5. Preoccupations: with doing good for another; with *how* to do good

B. Separate/Objective in relation to others

1. Have relationships: (relationships part of obligations/commitments; instrumental)
2. Abilities in relationships: skill in interacting with others
3. Traits/dispositions in relationships: (act in reciprocity; live up to duty/obligations; commitment; fairness)
4. Concern: for others in light of principles, values, beliefs or general good of society)
5. Preoccupations: with doing good for society; with *whether* to do good for others)

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